A STORY OF LOVE

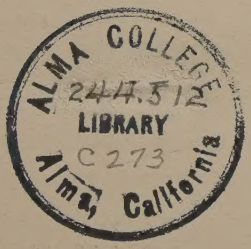
GASSILLY

Two Friends of Jesus.

A
STORY OF LOVE

BY

FRANCIS CASSILLY, S. J.



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INTRODUCTION.

HESE mornings," said a poet,[1] "impress me indescribably. They intoxicate me, they carry me away. I feel beguiled out of myself, dissolved in sunbeams, breezes, perfumes and sudden impulses of joy. And yet all the time I pine for I know not what intangible Eden."

What this poet felt in the buoyant life of a summer morning, even the most sluggish and irresponsive feel at times—an elevation of spirit in sympathy with nature, a yearning for some unknown good which seems hovering near, yet ever just beyond our grasp. Who has not fallen under the spell of the far-away hills? Whether clad in purple robe of morning, or crowned with the glory of noon, they ever beckon us toward them with the promise of rest and peace.

And yielding to their lure, in the hope of reaching that Arcadian land where life would fade into a blissful dream, we find on gaining the coveted sum-

[1] Amiel.

mits that they are just the same as the place we quitted. There are the same stunted trees, with bare earth and cropping stone showing between grasses and weeds. Not yet have we come to the land of promise, but lo! in the distance it still smiles at us and waves us onward, mocking us from the faint lines of the horizon.

What can it be, this charm of the distant hills? This call of the cloud to come and sail away to the gates of day, which even the inspired writer must have felt, when he sang of taking the wings of morning and dwelling in the uttermost parts of the sea? Like the quest of the Holy Grail, it leads us on over hill and valley to strange kingdoms and walled cities, through dangerous passes and across treacherous quagmires.

When field and woodland sleep in the warm embrace of the summer noontide and the feathered choirs are stilled, and even the gliding river seems to pause in its majestic course to the sea, who has not felt the brooding of an unseen presence in the transparent air, in the play of sunbeam and shadow? At such moments the Creator seems all but visible in His handiwork, so near that one almost fancies he may reach out and touch Him.

And who can forget that memorable night of long ago, when the fevered heat of the day with its toil and care had passed, leaving the mind open to every grateful influence from without? Moonlight wrapped the earth in softest radiance and fell in checkered patches from the trees, while the sentinel stars stood guard in the background of the sky. The dewy air, odorous of summer blossoms, brought from afar the sound of soft music, that stole into the soul and, mingling with the other sense impressions of the night, formed a blended harmony of light and sound, fragrance and feeling. For the moment the soul, exalted out of itself, seemed but as a strain in the great concert of being.

Such manifestations of nature come only at intervals, and fully, perhaps, only to those whose mind and mood bring them into unison with the heart of their great Mother. In his charming allegory, "The Forest of Arden," Hamilton Wright Mabie says that when he first began to speak of the forest "most people scouted the very idea of such a country; many did not even understand what I meant. Many a time at sunset, when the light has lain soft and tender on the distant forest, I have pointed it out, only to be told that what I thought was the forest was a splendid pile of clouds, a shining mass of mist. I came to

understand, at last, that Arden exists only for a few."

Perhaps only to them who dream dreams, who are innocent as Sir Percival, the Pure, is it given to share thus in nature's secrets, and in silent haunts to hear and understand its mystic communications. And to such is granted the blessed gift of loneliness, whether in the solitude of their chamber, or under the dome of night when the luminous worlds keep their silent march across the boundless heavens, or most of all in the crowded gathering amidst festive surroundings.

This sense of separation from the world and its frivolities knows not time nor place, it weaves a barrier of isolation about the pensive soul wherever it may be. And its effect is to steep the spirit in a sweet melancholy and drive it to seek solace and stay in none of the glittering toys of life, but in some unknown and hidden object for which it pines in an aimless, helpless fashion.

The world, untaught by the bitter experience of the ages, still flounders on, looking for happiness where it is not, neglecting it where it is, never finding it, yet ever hoping to come upon it at the next turn of the road or just beyond the horizon bar. Men are ever searching for something, they know not

what, and striving to hug to their bosom every illusive phantom of pleasure that crosses their path, only to find it vanish into thin air at their approach. Oh! if they but knew that the kingdom of God is within.

In the following pages he whose eye is clear with the light of faith, and such only will understand, may perceive what is this splendid vision that lies just beyond the veil of sense, this object that the heart-sick and weary of earth are born but to find and possess, and which not finding and not possessing, they had better by far have never been born.

A STORY OF LOVE

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDSHIP.

N ESSENTIAL attribute of creatures is dependence. The idea of an absolutely independent creature is self-contradictory. This property of dependence we see existing all about us in the physical world, in the mutual attraction and repulsion of atoms to form bodies, in the combination of bodies to form the earth.

The globe on which we live receives light, heat and motion from the sun; our satellite, the moon, clings to the earth; and our whole solar system is influenced from without. Nowhere in space will you find a lost star, an unattached planet. The invisible chain of gravity binds together all the heavenly bodies, and swings them off in their appointed orbits. Nothing is sufficient of and for itself. Created force that does not proceed from and tend to something outside of itself is inconceivable.

And this innate tendency to seek rest and support in something else is found not alone in purely material things, but it is exemplified, too, in the moral nature of man. None of us is strong enough to stand alone; we need assistance of some kind. Man was created apparently incomplete in himself. Like the climbing vine he is ever waving about the tendrils of his affections, feeling for some object to twine and fasten to. Even in the state of original justice was this true, for God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, strong and perfect though he was, and so He gave him a helpmeet.

Nowhere is the clinging nature of the heart more beautifully displayed than in family life, where husband, wife and children are bound together with the strong cords of affection. In the family has been cradled all that is best and fairest in human aspiration and achievement, and round it cluster the fragrant memories of what is purest and most sacred in each one's life. Chateaubriand says somewhere that in the family there are fourteen different shades and varieties of affection, corresponding to the various relationships existing in it. There are the relationships of husband to wife, of father to son, of father to daughter, of mother to son and mother to daughter, of brother to brother and

brother to sister; and the reciprocal relations of wife to husband, of son to father and son to mother, of daughter to father and daughter to mother, of sister to brother and sister to sister. And from each of these relations arises a distinct variation of love with its own peculiar quality of tenderness.

But family affections, wide and absorbing as they are, do not exhaust man's capacity for loving. He seems forced to go beyond its pale and find other kindred souls, on which to lavish his affections. No one is so callous as not to call someone friend. And here we strike the theme of friendship on which so many of the world's greatest minds and pens have employed themselves. Poets have sung its praises and sages endeavored to plumb its depths, but it ever remains a new and entrancing subject of delight to young generations. No one is satisfied with hearing or reading of it, each would test and experience it for himself.

Perhaps nothing finer from a natural standpoint has ever been written on friendship than Cicero's celebrated treatise, which has incurred the fate considered so harrowing by Juvenal, of being spelled and tortured by schoolboys for twenty centuries. In it he gives the quaint theory of a learned man of Agrigentum, which is certainly more poetical if less

scientific than some more modern explanations of the attractive and repulsive forces of matter, that bodies are drawn together by friendship or held apart by discord. A pretty touch of nature that shows all the world akin, he brings out in the thunderous applause that filled the theater, when, in a new play by Marcus Pacuvius, the king pronounced death sentence on Orestes, and straightway the devoted friends, Orestes and Pylades, both strenuously claimed to be that person.

Even inspired writers are impelled to speak of friendship, and when they touch the subject there is an unwonted glow and warmth to their pen. We are told by one of them that a steadfast friend "shall be to thee as thyself,"[1] that "a faithful friend is a strong defence"[2] and we are warned not to forsake an old friend, for the new will not be like him until first mellowed with age like rich, old wine.[3]

To understand what is meant by a friend ought not to be difficult, since the word is found in frequent use in all languages and amongst all peoples, and hence must represent one of the early concepts of the mind. One who performs a kindly deed is said to

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[1] Ecclus. vi, 11.
[2] vi, 14.
[3] ix, 14, 15.

act in a kind or friendly manner, and if he frequently repeats such actions so as to evidence an habitual attitude of disinterested good-will toward another, he is ordinarily styled a friend. It is true that one may be moved to confer a benefit by some selfish motive, by self-interest or the hope of an equivalent return, but such conduct does not merit the name of friendship. The true friend forgets self and thinks only of the welfare of the other.

Friendship then requires one to think kindly of another, to esteem him and wish him well, and so is based on love. This is universally admitted and it is patent from the fact that in many languages love and friendship are expressed by the same word, or at least by words derived from the same root. Even in English the word "friend" is only the participle of an Anglo-Saxon word which means to love. And what expression is more commonly heard than "the love of friendship," which is evidence that the mind regards the one but as a species of the other?

> "Friendship's an abstract of love's noble flame,
> 'Tis love refined and purged from all its dross,
> The next to angel's love, if not the same." [32]

Now love is an act of the will, and the will, like any other faculty, has its own proper object. As

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[32] Catharine Philips.

sounds are perceived by the ear and colors by the eye, as the intellect assents to truth, so the will finds rest in the good. Of its very nature it loves what is good and hates what is evil. It cannot love evil as such. Evil may masquerade as good and so deceive the will into a false love, and what is good may deck itself in so attractive a garb as to beget an intemperate or inordinate desire of it. But good in some shape or form is ever the proper object of love. And the love of friendship is no exception to this rule. In natural friendship we base our good-will to another on his own goodness, we give him our love because we consider him worthy of it. There may be partners in crime, but never friends. True friendship then at its best can exist only between the good and for a good end.

Are we to conclude from this that mere love and admiration of another are sufficient to constitute friendship, or is something further required? Far back in his day the prince of pagan philosophers, Aristotle, essayed to define friendship, "Mutua aliquorum benevolentia non latens," "the mutual and known good-will of one for another." One may esteem and love you highly, and yet, if you are not aware of his sentiments, you are not properly his friend; and even when you learn his attitude toward

you, you still give him no right to call you friend, until you accept his offering of affection and let him know that you reciprocate it.

Friendship, then, is a mutual love, and though called forth by the consideration of another's worth it remains free in the giving. Love is a capricious force, setting ordinary laws at defiance, refusing to come under hard-set canons and rules, and delighting in wayward impulse and inconsistency. You cannot force it; it demands absolute freedom, and would be spontaneous as the cloud that leaps from the sea at the kiss of the sun. You cannot bind or halter, command or purchase it. Of its essence it is a free gift and unpurchasable. Many things in the world are for barter—sordid things, which the earthly-minded prize and spend their lives in the endeavor to obtain. Place and power, affluence and ease are among the mercenary things that are bought and sold in the market-place, and some cynically claim that everything may be had for money. But the true, genuine things of life, which are really worth the having, are all unpurchasable. Is happiness a marketable commodity? Or love, or honor, virtue, truth or fidelity? The inspiration derived from the starry heavens, from the glory of sunrise, the elevation of mind produced by the wide prospect of field and

meadow, bending sky and sweep of ocean, are possessions beyond price. Such things are the inheritance of the race, which cannot be taken from it, or trafficked in for exclusive use or ownership. They are largesses to it from the Creator. And one of these gifts which money cannot buy is the love of a friend. It comes to us unsought, or at least is ours for the asking, and if it does not so come, all the wealth of the Orient will not get it for us.

But, though friendship's love is given free it must have a return of love or it cannot live. The saying is that love feeds on air; it were truer, perhaps, to say that it feeds on love. It surrenders self, but it still lives in another, and so it comes to pass that in all literature a friend is styled another self, "an image of self," the other "half of one's soul." "I was his soul, he lived not but in me," sings Dryden. Diogenes defines friends as "one soul in two bodies;" and Shakespeare considers them to have "two seeming bodies, but one heart." Scripture sets its seal of approval on this manner of speaking, when it says that a steadfast friend "shall be to thee as thyself," "tibi quasi coaequalis."[4]

Since love consists in so close a riveting of hearts, it would seem natural to conclude that it flourishes

[4] Ecclus. vi, 11.

best between equals. St. Jerome does not hesitate to say that "friendship either finds equals or makes them." Where no interest, pursuit or similarity of taste exists in common, it is evident that nothing serves to draw the wills together, to unite them as a "mysterious cement of the soul."

Where strict equality is found, writers tell us that friendship is generally strongest, and that, when wanting, its absence must be compensated by some identity of purpose or interest to the attainment of which each contributes according to his means and ability. Here, though equality be lacking, at least there exist a harmony and proportion of wills sufficient to raze the barriers of separation. Men closely bound by friendship's tie ordinarily feel so keenly the chafing of inequality that the superior strives to keep his own eminence in the background, and at the same time to elevate his friend, as near as may be, to his own station. Thus we read in Scripture that King Alexander, wishing to make Jonathan, the valiant brother of Judas Machabeus, his confederate and friend, appointed him high priest of his nation and sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold to raise him to a dignity worthy of a king's friend.[5]

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[5] 1 Mach. x, 20.

CHAPTER II.

QUALITIES OF FRIENDSHIP.

HE love of friendship is, as we have seen, a free and voluntary donation of self to another, but once made, it becomes a kind of bondage. It then forswears liberty, would have none of it, and desires only to draw closer the fetters and chains that hold it without power to break them. Whence springs this sudden change, this desire of servitude? The theologian Viva tells us that it arises from the mutual donation of friends, whereby each pledges to the other a permanent and irrevocable love. What is given is given without the intention of recall. Neither belongs any longer entirely to himself, nor retains the right to manifest or withhold his affection at pleasure. The friend signs away his freedom, becomes a willing slave, and by withdrawing from his other self the affection which is his due, he would break a mutual and sacred compact, incur the reproach of being faithless and untrue. He who, wearying of friendship's bond, loosens or breaks it, be-

comes at once the scorn of the tribe. True friends would be such for ever and a day; they cannot be parted save by a riving of the soul, which many moons indeed may sear, but never heal without leaving a scar.

And when a friend deeds himself to another, he makes no reserves. Everything goes with self, hand as well as heart, and possessions, too, as the wrapper with the parcel. "All things are common between friends" was a discovery of the old Greek sage, Diogenes, if indeed he did not find it established as a truism in the social circle of his time. Could one who has free entry into the heart be denied admission into a house of wood or stone? Who gives the greater thereby includes the lesser. And surely the body is more than the raiment, the love of the giver than the gift of the lover. Shakespeare, repeating Plautus, said, "What's mine is yours and what's yours is mine." And so, too, have devoted lovers ever said, since friendship true, like Prometheus' fire, found its way to earth, and so, too, will they ever say as long as its glowing torch continues to light and warm mortal hearts.

Being essentially a donation, friendship can never cease to give or at least to desire to give. Presents and tokens of some kind ever accompany it, and

these are prized not for what they are, but because they are freighted with the fragrance of the heart which bestowed them. Empty sentiment, one will say, and yet sentiment ever clings round the human affections like the ivy round the tower or the perfume to the rose; though like all genuine things it may have its counterfeit. Simple natures have most of true sentiment. St. Gertrude felt an attachment to the very tablets she wrote upon; the gentle saint of Assisi gathered up torn pieces of manuscript that he found along the roadside because they were traced with markings of thought, God's spiritual gift to man. What was it that led Jonathan to strip himself of coat and garments, even to his sword and belt and girdle, and give them to David?[1] Would anyone affirm it was false sentiment that caused Blessed Edmund Campion, than whom a truer or braver knight never took life in his hands, to exchange hats with Father Persons at their last meeting on earth? For sentiment of some kind it certainly was, and to it we owe the only relic of the martyr that escaped the rage of his truculent executioners.

Is it empty sentiment in the soldier to salute the

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[1] 1 Kings, xviii, 3.

flag, to wish to die facing the foe? Is the religious who kisses his habit on putting it on or off a mere sentimentalist? In fact, we fear that Mother Church indulges in something very like sentiment in the treatment she accords to the relics of her saints. Nothing that belonged to them, bone or ribbon or ashes, raveled thread of their garments, book or scrap of paper, escapes her loving search, and what she finds she preserves in precious reliquary or guards as a jealous custodian.

The generous heart then must give, for it knows that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Not, indeed, that it calculates in its gratuities, or hopes for a return of the bread it casts upon the waters. Nay, self has no place in its thoughts; it gives from the mere joy of giving, desiring to strip itself of what it has for the sake of another.

Amongst the possessions shared in by friends are joy and sorrow. It is a matter of every-day experience that the sympathy of another is a great solace in grief, while the one who has received joyful news wishes everyone to hear it. So it was in the time of Our Lord, Who describes the woman that had lost her groat as lighting her candle and sweeping out the dark corners of the dwelling until she found it, when she called together her neighbors and bade

them share her joy.[2] And St. Paul gives as a sign of love "without dissimulation" that it makes us "rejoice with them that rejoice," and "weep with them that weep."[3]

A further possession most jealously guarded by men, double locked and bolted within the heart, are secrets. These we regard as sacred, almost as a part of our personality, and we dread to have them exposed to a cold and unsympathetic gaze. While concealing them so carefully, we have at the same time an almost irresistible inclination to disclose them to one we trust and confide in. They are like a hidden fire within, burning and consuming until they are released. And so when crushed under the burden of a secret too heavy to bear alone, we are bound perforce to ask another to help us carry it. A friend is the natural depository of such a disclosure, whence arises the common saying, "There are no secrets between friends."

It follows, too, from the nature of friendship, according to the opinion of St. Thomas, that friends are impelled to seek each other's company, for the heart desires the presence of the object it loves.

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[2] Luke xv, 8, 9.
[3] Rom. xii, 15.

Flowers turn and climb to the light, and friendship is best content when basking in the sunshine of the friend's countenance. It is but pain and duress, said Buddha, to be separated from what we love. Yet, almost irresistibly as one is drawn to the presence and conversation of a friend, this propensity does not constitute the essence of friendship, which is rather to rest in the well-being of another. But it follows the essence as the shadow the substance, as the caresses of a mother accompany her loving care and solicitude for her child.

And, finally, it is characteristic of friendship to make, and wish to make, sacrifices for another. Sunshine friendship, the idle sport of a summer day, endures only so long as it is pleasant and agreeable, and cannot weather the storms of adversity. When the halcyon days of prosperity are gone, and dark clouds shut in the horizon of the soul, and chilling blasts freeze the heart, then is the time when the cheer and warmth of friendship are needed most. To love as long as convenient is but another name for selfishness. But to come to the assistance of another, when it means the sacrifice of ease and comfort, the risking of property, and the braving of the world's obloquy—this is the part of friendship loyal and true. The inspired writer tells us he is a friend that "lov-

eth at all times, and a brother is proved in distress.''[4] Nor does it matter that the object of affection be poor and outcast, but rather the more helpless and pitiable he is the more attentive and solicitous is the friend. And in such circumstances is friendship proved as gold in the furnace, as the stout ship in the equinoctial gale.

But is it possible to find a flower of so exquisite and delicate a texture amongst the rank flora of earth? Did the Creator, when he scattered the seeds of plant life on the third day of creation include this exotic in His sowing? Friendship is the commonest of growths in the heart of man. God is most lavish of His best and most useful and necessary gifts. What is less needed, He hides beneath mountains or plunges under the sea. Friendship is everywhere, but it reaches its perfection of growth only in generous natures. Splendid examples of it are scattered through history, and are conserved in sacred and profane literature. Jonathan's soul was knit to David's, Ruth would not leave Noemi, and Paul never forgot his spiritual son, Timothy. We still weep today over Virgil's touching account of Nisus and Euryalus; while we wonder at the intimacy of the two dis-

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[4] Prov. xvii, 17.

similar characters, Blessed Thomas More and Erasmus. Ignatius of Loyola by his friendship for Francis Xavier gave an apostle to the Indies; Francis and Clare were like brother and sister, and Theresa and John of the Cross almost turned Spain into a monastery.

CHAPTER III.

MY FRIEND DIVINE.

RIENDSHIPS between men we readily understand, and we have all experienced them in varying degrees of intensity and permanency. But does it occur to us that there is such a thing on earth as divine friendship? Often indeed we have heard that we are friends of God, but does the phrase convey any definite, clear meaning, or is it to us a mere conventional expression, another way of saying that we are in the state of grace, or that we are free from mortal sin?

Inspired writers do not choose their words at random. From Holy Writ, its assertions and phraseology, the theologians draw a great part of the dogmas of revelation. Its pages, as interpreted by the Councils of the Church, the teaching of the Sovereign Pontiffs, and the commentaries of the Fathers, give us most of what we know about revelation and divine things.

In many places Scripture tells us that God is the friend of the just man. The Psalmist says, "To me

Thy friends, O God, are made exceeding honorable."[1] We are informed that they who use wisdom "become the friends of God," or according to a closer rendering of the Latin text, "become sharers in the friendship of God."[2] Abraham in both the Old and New Testaments is called the "friend of God." St. John in his touching account of the Last Supper records Christ's memorable words: "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth. But I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you."[3]

Thus we have the term "friend of God" applied repeatedly and insistently to those who were pleasing to Him. Are we to imagine that in all these cases the inspired writers and Christ Himself intended the expression to be taken only figuratively, in a vague, shadowy way? Or did they mean what they said, and say what they meant?

When Christ spoke the words: "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you,"[4] He evidently intended to exact obedience from His

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1 Ps. 138:17.
2 Wisdom vii, 14.
3 John xv, 15.
4 John xv, 14.

apostles. Could He then in justice, after they had given generous and entire obedience to His commands, say to them: "You have indeed done literally what I commanded you, but I did not mean my part of the compact to be literal, so I will fulfill my promise only in a figurative way, by being to you not a real friend, but only a sort of benevolent master or overlord?" The very formulating of this question shows its absurdity, since we know that God does not, like man, promise and not fulfill, and that He never suffers Himself to be outdone in generosity.

Moreover, the general rule for the interpretation of Scripture is, that the direct and obvious sense of the words is to be taken, unless there be good reason in the context or in the nature of the matter treated to read a tropical meaning into them. In the texts cited no hint is given for suspecting any other than a literal meaning of friendship; nor does any sufficient reason appear for doubting the possibility of God's being a real and true friend to us.

The Council of Trent in its decree concerning the nature of justification takes this view of divine friendship, for without qualification it says, "By justification man from unjust becomes just, and from an enemy a friend;"[5] and again, "having, therefore,

[5] Sess. 6:c. 7.

been thus justified and made the friends of God and members of his Household."[6]

God, then, is a real friend of the just, with all that a true, genuine friendship implies. To doubt it were to doubt revelation itself. We may now proceed to see how the nature and qualities of friendship, as outlined in the preceding chapters, are verified between God and us. Friendship is mutual love, and Christ Himself teaches us that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart and soul; and this love must be for His own sake, on account of Himself and His infinite perfections and amiability. This precept is reasonable and, with the help of grace, not over difficult, since our very nature prompts us to love and esteem one who is every way worthy, even apart from the consideration whether he has rendered us any personal service.

We then can and must love God for His own sake. And that He loves us is evidenced by His words and deeds, by the whole scheme of creation and redemption, by His daily solicitude and care over us. And this love is not for His own benefit or emolument, since He needs nothing of us, and we can give Him

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[6] Sess. 6:c. x.

nothing that He has not. So His charity cannot be for His own sake, hence it must be for ours. And here the question naturally presents itself, how God can find anything in us to draw His complacence.

It is the universal law of intelligent being to love itself and what pertains to it. God, too, comes under this law, or rather we should say it proceeds and springs from Him. He does and must love Himself and what belongs to Him. Now it is not hard to show that we belong to Him, and by many titles. We are His creatures, the work of His hands, the offspring, so to speak, of His wisdom and counsel. We are made to His own image and likeness and so share in His essence and being, so far indeed as limited and created perfection may partake of the infinite. And we need not delay here on the manifestation of His predilection for us in the work of redemption. So in loving us God is only loving what pertains and belongs to Him, a reflection and embodying of Himself. We are His, and so intimately that as long as we are faithful and true He cannot discard or forget us.

We all know from experience the depth and intensity, the strength and sweetness of a mother's love for her child. Others may wonder what she discovers in her infant that makes her forget and sac-

rifice self for its sake. She loves it without reasoning why, because it is her own; and, seeing in it a multitude of perfections to which others are blind, she cherishes it for its own sake. And God has compared His love of us to that of a mother, and pronounced it even greater, so that if it were possible for her to forget the child of her womb, yet will not He forsake us. And though mother and father abandon us, He will take us up, and in return He expects us to love Him more than our father and mother, even, if necessary, leaving them for His name's sake.

True love, then, between God and man may and can exist. But friendship to be complete requires, as we have seen, the mutual knowledge of this affection. Each friend must know the existence of the other's love. Now, how can we be sure of a reciprocal love between God and us since no one knows whether he is worthy of love or hatred? No man can be absolutely sure that he is in God's grace. But even in human friendship a friend's love is often known more by his manner of acting than by the testimony of words. If he acts kindly and generously towards us, showers favors upon us, and takes pleasure in our company, we do not think of questioning his friendship, but take it for granted, since loving deeds can spring only from a loving heart. When the earth

is flooded with light, no one searches the sky to discover if the sun be shining.

In like manner, the sincere Christian, who is conscious of having done nothing to forfeit God's friendship, who ever strives to obey His law, who feels within the peace that passeth all understanding, and beholds graces constantly lavished upon him, can have the highest probability, amounting to a sort of moral certainty, that God loves him. And this is sufficient for friendship in this life. The friendship of the wayfarer on earth cannot be as perfect as that of the possessor in heaven; for, besides our uncertainty of mind, there is always the danger of losing it, but when the veils shall be removed all doubt shall disappear in the sunburst of vision, and fear shall give way to the joy of possession.

The effect of love sometimes becomes so intense in the souls of holy persons while still upon earth that it seems a very fire within them. Spiritual writers tell us of the sixth degree of the Mystic Union, called the "flame of love." St. Stanislaus, consumed with this flame, was forced to run out into the wintry air to seek relief from the scorching heat within his breast. This mysterious flame burned even the skin upon the breast of Gemma Galgani. St. Paul of the Cross exclaimed, "I feel my entrails parched, I thirst

and wish to drink; but to extinguish this burning, I would wish to drink torrents of fire."

And the seventh degree of the Mystic Union is the thirst and anguish of love. Father Scaramelli, a standard Jesuit author on this subject, says of it: "The anguish of love is a living and ardent desire of God, loved and tasted, but not yet possessed by the soul. The continuance or duration of its pangs, which form and establish themselves, so to say, in the very marrow of the soul, is called the 'Thirst of Love.'" Blessed Mary of the Angels was a victim of this parching thirst, which copious draughts of icy water could not allay. Human language simply stammers and halts, when it essays to speak of these sublime heights of love, which only they who have seen can understand. This was the experience of St. Paul, who tells us that when rapt in vision he heard secret words that it is not given to man to utter.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S GIFTS.

AS WE have seen, a friend delights to give, to bestow tokens of love. And where do we find God's gifts to us? Everywhere, in the broad bands of sunlight that lie upon the fields by day, or steal in reflected beams from the moon by night, in the long wake of the rising or setting sun that breaks across the waters into a million sparkling diamonds. There is love divine in the dew drop, in the sheets of rain and hail that drive before the northern blast, in the swelling mountain and soaring peak, in the winds that career in wild freedom over the moor, and the southern gales that blow from perfumed grove and garden—in the glory and promise of morning as well as in the calm and fulfillment of eve.

All about us lies a fascinating creation, myriad in its variety, wondrous in its unity. The earth we live on leaps joyously into its voyage through space, revolving on its axis, swinging about the pole, yet true to the second in its gigantic yearly orbit, while our

solar system moves on in the firmament to some unknown goal. And sun and stars, land and sea, wind and rain, all are ministering to the many needs of man. Light and heat, ice and snow and air are all busy, through a never-ending cycle, working for us, producing from the soil rich vegetation, grains and grasses, and enabling the flocks and herds to cover field and prairie. Creation is now as in the beginning, a love song of the Most High. Its harmonies are never stilled. Light, color and shade, sound and silence, time, space and action blend together in one unending refrain of love with unnumbered variations. The rustling of the leaves, the roll of ocean, the shriek of the storm, the wild dance of the blizzard, are all only different rhythms and movements of the same symphony.

And why this vast outlay of power and tireless energy through countless ages? It is all the gift of God's love. Nothing but love could make Him call forth from nothingness. For a blessed eternity, Love lived in itself and was happy. Each Person of the Triune God was sufficient to attract and satisfy by His perfections the infinite power and capacity for loving that dwelt in the others.

But Infinite Love was not content to rest in self. It must body forth created beings, manifestations

of itself, to which it would communicate, according to their nature, the perfections and charms of which they were capable. So God spoke, and a void and empty earth came into existence. For unknown ages the Divine hand labored at this unformed creation. The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters. Lights were placed in the heavens, the greater and the lesser, and the stars were sown in the milky way. Slowly the Creator moulded the rock-ribbed earth, divided the seas from the land, planted the green herbs and gave them seeds to propagate themselves. He made the fishes and taught them the pathways of the deep. He fashioned the animals, those that now exist, as well as those of extinct races whose huge frames found under glaciers or in alluvial deposits, give mute testimony of their departed strength and glory.

And when the earth was ready for man to live on it, and the supertropical vegetation that had helped to prepare the soil for cultivation had given way to useful plants and trees, and the mastodons and leviathans as well as the animalcules after doing their work had passed away, then man was created from the slime of the earth and a living soul breathed into him. And what was first in the intention of God came last into being.

And the long march of the nations began. They went forth and covered the earth, conquered the wilderness and built cities—they chained the lightning and harnessed the ocean. Men used creation for their own purposes, leveling the mountains, filling the valleys, bridging the rivers. They beat down the great highways of travel, laid out paths upon the sea, tunneled the mountains, flew above the clouds and sailed under the waters; bound countries together with bands of steel, and taught invisible messengers to carry thought and voice around the earth.

And in the duly appointed time, I appeared upon the earth; I perceived myself amongst the sons and daughters of men, in a civilization grown old in the ages. And what is this marvelous gift that dawns upon me? I can know and understand, myself as well as other things. I perceive myself to be a being, self-possessed, independent, with power of life and motion, and ability to say, "I am, I exist, I have a being distinct from all other beings." Truly a God-like attribute. Were it not a plain, every-day, palpable fact, who could believe it? How can one who is not self-existent wake to existence, to thought and knowledge? Is it possible that stocks and stones should know and feel? And of myself I am far less than stock and stone. I am sprung from nothing-

ness. Who can give to non-being being and consciousness? None but the infinite Creator. And so I am an imitation, a projection of Infinite Being, the production of His omnipotence, a created, lighted spark coming from the unlighted ever-burning sun of Eternal Being.

Of all material creation only man can say, "I am, I know," and in that utterance he pronounces his own everlasting existence. For, whatever knows in an intellectual way can never cease wholly to know, whatever has reflexive consciousness can never lose entirely a sense of its own identity. The principle of of thought and consciousness, like that which called it into being, is spiritual and hence indestructible and destined to perpetuity.

The animals about us, with their sentient existence and powers, can never singly nor collectively say, or even know intelligently that they exist. And what does not thus know itself, cannot consciously or intelligently work for itself. Whatever it does for itself is done by a mere instinctive perception; it does not, cannot consciously guide itself to any end, aim or object. Whatever purpose then it serves is placed in it from without, and for some end extrinsic to and beyond itself and its own good. It does not then possess itself, has no rights of its own,

because in itself it is purposeless, meaningless; and it acquires a reason for its being only in so far as this helps or furthers the existence of something else. It has only sensitive perception, it knows in a sentient way, but it cannot know explicitly that it knows, which is the real test of intelligence and consequent spirituality. Man, on the contrary, answers to this supreme test, for he knows, and he knows that he knows, he is and he knows that he is.

And flowing necessarily from man's attribute of consciousness, is that other God-given power of loving. Love is the child of perception. Intelligent being created or increate in perceiving the true must also perceive the good, for whatever is true is good; and as its nature is to know truth so also it has a natural propensity to love or embrace what is good.

The law of love is based on the nature and essence of God. He loves Himself, and with a necessary, infinite love. He cannot do otherwise. In some things God is free; He is free to create, to redeem, but not to be unjust, unmerciful. He is not free to withhold love from Himself, nor from any creature who loves Him. And as God must love, in fact as He is Love, so His intelligent creatures, the angelic hosts in heaven and men on earth, in imitation of Him possess this Godlike attribute.

Even in the lower creation, in the animal, vegetable and inorganic kingdoms, everywhere there is some faint adumbration or analogy of love. For, each animal and plant, each atom or molecule must seek its own, work for itself, tend to its own conservation and the exercise of its own energy. Not to do so were to let itself become the unresisting prey of every disintegrating force about it, and render itself absolutely incapable of action, for all action either is or depends upon the self-conservation of being. This truth is so evident that men have embodied it in the proverb, "self-preservation is the first law of nature." And this seeking of what is good for itself and its own nature, that exists in all bodies, what is it but a sort of analogous love, all the love that a non-conscious being is capable of?

So tenacious indeed are bodies of existence that, though we may change their form and shape, it is impossible for us to reduce them to nothingness, and this fact scientists recognize in the principle they have formulated that matter is indestructible. And so it is, except by the Almighty will that brought it into being. And whether a single atom that has been created by Omnipotence shall ever cease to exist, is one of the secrets that is hidden in the mind of God alone; though St. Thomas is strongly of the opinion that no atom of the material creation will ever perish.

Blessed, then, be the Eternal Goodness of God, which has given to men the power to know and love. But knowing and loving are impossible without an object to rest in. The most perfect eye would be useless, if there were nothing to see. We should, in fact, never know that we had the sense of sight, if we lived in impenetrable darkness, or even in the brightest light which illumined no body. And if there were no sounds about us, we should live in a world of silence more appalling than the stillness of an Arctic winter, where at least the crunching of the snow underfoot and the whistling of the wind can be heard. If no sound vibration reached the ear, we might as well be born without the sense of hearing.

And what is it God has given us to know and love? The objects of these actions are endless. We can know truth and love goodness wherever they be found. And they lie all about us in objects innumerable as the leaves in the forests. The manifestations of truth, beauty and goodness are so limitless that the sons of men, from creation's dawn to the present time, with all their accumulated wisdom, keenness of observation and study, have never exhausted them. Each new creature, flashing into our horizon of experience, is as it were a new creation in miniature, with a truth and loveliness all its own, and capable

of claiming our attention and admiration; and so it will be during the never-ending ages of eternity, where truth and beauty, "ever ancient, ever new," will have power to fascinate and charm us.

Beginning with self, we can proceed outward to creatures, in all of which there are vestiges of the Creator. We can contemplate the law, order and harmony that are visible in them as transient reflections from the great source of all harmony and beauty. So marvelous in number and variety are the rivers of truth, flowing from the eternal well-springs of Being, that every day new sciences and new developments of the older knowledge are required to explore them.

And with all our boasted knowledge and wisdom we are, as it were, only scratching the surface of things. But at times, alas! so hypnotized are we by created beauty that we seek it for itself and rest in it, as though it were the end and aim of our existence, forgetting that it is intended merely to be placed under our feet, as a stepping stone, to enable us to rise to Eternal Truth and Beauty that will endure forever.

These are some of the beautiful things that God gives us in our journey through life. To enumerate all His benisons would fill more books than have ever been written, if we may be permitted to use St. John's

illustration. For, every second of existence, every breath we draw, every pulsation of our heart, is but one more added favor to those already past.

CHAPTER V.

GOD EVER WORKING FOR ME.

N THE last chapter we have considered some of God's gifts to man. But our treatment were incomplete did we not reflect on His abiding presence in all His gifts. We learned in childhood days that God, by virtue of His immensity, is everywhere. Nothing created is remote from Him. Beyond Him, out of His sight, there is nothing. He exists in and about every creature, or rather, each creature is in Him. In remotest planet, in the last grain of stardust whirling on the confines of space, in depths of ocean, wherever there is created being, there must dwell the Increate. Nothing that He has made escapes Him, is forgotten, deserted or abandoned, for in the moment that He forgot or forsook it it would perish, reverting to its original nothingness. It is the weakness or privilege of man to forget, but not of the Creator.

And so it happens that each moment of the continued existence of creatures is, as it were, a new crea-

tion. For, to conserve in being things which of themselves constantly tend to nothingness requires the same Almighty Power that brought them first into existence. And as Omnipotence cannot delegate the power of creation to highest angel, so neither can He alienate from Himself the absolute care and dominion over His own creation. Small, insignificant though I be, mine is the happy lot of being destined ever to be borne up on the bosom, encircled by the arm, of Omnipotence itself.

And from the dogma of God's omnipresence follow many consoling reflections. From it I learn that my Creator is never absent one moment from me during my long progress from the cradle to the grave, that His presence ever envelopes me as the ambient air, as the all-pervading ether which is said to fill every nook and cranny of space. More tenderly than the most devoted of mothers, He watches and guards me sleeping and waking. Not a gift of His love will He entrust entirely to any messenger, however holy; but He will bring it to me Himself, since it is as impossible for Him to be absent from His gift as from me.

And not only is God present to me at all times, or rather am I present to Him, since in Him and by Him I am and have my being, but, besides, God is ever

working for me. Philosophers tell us of the beautiful doctrine of the divine concurrence, which arises out of the nature of created or dependent action. All created entity must come from and depend on God. Without Him there can be nothing. The moment any being or entity existed independent of or apart from God, it would cease to be a creature. And each action in the universe, whether proceeding from highest angel or lowly atom, has an entity of its own, it is something, and as such must depend on God. Every change in the face of the sky, each ruffling of the waters, the motion of bird or insect, the rising of the sap in the stalk—all are new modifications of being, and so new beings themselves.

And where is there surcease of action? Forces and powers lie all about, each in play or struggling to be set free. The leaves on the tree outside my window are swaying in the wind. A simple operation surely, and yet who will enumerate the forces required to bring it about? The pressure of the wind, the pull of gravity, the resistance of the leaf, the elasticity of the branch, the strength of the trunk, and numerous other agencies are in steady action, and with each element of this combined energy God must concur to produce this apparently trifling result.

Nothing is inactive. Work, energy is the price of

being. In midwinter, when nature seems a dead and frozen thing, wrapped in its winding sheet of snow, when no leaf or flower can be seen, action does not cease, it but seems to pause. The current of plant life is but sluggish in its channels, there is still sap within the branches, and the dormant buds are but waiting for the first breath of spring to leap into renewed life. And deep within the ground, below the frost line, the chemical forces are at work in the roots, preparing for the intense burst of summer activity. Nature sleeps, but sleep is only quieter action. Entire cessation of action is death. The more intense, higher and nobler the mode of action, the nearer it approaches Infinite Action, which knows nor pause nor rest.

There can then be no being or action of being which is not dependent on God in its inception and continuance. The sun shines, and the action of shining proceeds from the sun, which has energy of its own, but, for the exercise of that energy God's concurrence is absolutely necessary, so that the shining is equally from God and the sun, or rather primarily from God, the first cause and mover of all things, and secondarily from the sun. At the falling of the leaves, the cricket chirps from its hiding place, but it could not sing without the Creator's co-operation.

From this concurrence of God with the action of all

creatures it follows that whatever creatures do for me, He also does. He is busy in the gathering clouds and the falling rain, forming the drops and carrying them gently to earth, causing them to sink into the thirsty soil or fill the streams and rivers. He swings the ponderous earth back and forth in its multiple motions, to give us day and night and the returning seasons. He is fireman of the sun, and He lights the lamps in the sky; He is head gardener and husbandman of the world.

The Creator is ever working for me more constantly and assiduously than workman or varlet ever did for his master from loyalty or fear. Every kind ministration of my father or mother was equally His. He built the house that shelters me far more truly than the carpenters and masons who labored on it, and so He was my mason and builder. He plants and waters and reaps the grain, grinds it in the mill, and brings the flour to my door. He lights the fire, sets the water to boil and cooks my meals, and when all is ready He sets the table and serves the dishes. So He is truckman, carrier, cook and server to me all the days of my life. And are any of these occupations menial, then God is my servant, and while other servants may come and go, tiring of me and my service, God never leaves me, but He is a willing bondman to me and will

be forever. This subject we could pursue into an infinitude of details, reflecting that God is teacher, educator, printer, physician, priest and civil magistrate to us, but each can make these and other applications for himself.

The thought may here obtrude itself how the Creator can perform these multitudinous ministrations without burden and weariness. It is love that drives Him on, and love never wearies of well-doing. We tire of protracted toil, become heart-sick and weary in the treadmill of duty, our muscles ache and our brain becomes fagged, and rest we must have. But God never wearies of action. To work, to act is His nature and essence, and He cannot rest. Inaction is to Him impossible. Even creatures find the greatest pleasure in activity. It is no strain for the eagle to soar through the air, for trees to grow, for man to think. But as all these operations involve waste of matter, which must constantly be renewed, intervals of rest are necessary. God's energy, however, is infinite, always intense, never consumed or diminished, without beginning or end, and hence requires not replenishing, rest or recuperation. His work is never toil, but resembles rather free and invigorating play. It is without stress, worry or solicitude.

Since God then never lets me out of His sight, how

can I ever forget His presence? Since He is ever working, doing for me, how shall I ever perform any action which is not directed to Him? True friendship is never content away from the object of its love, and can I, whom God cannot bear to part from for a moment, be happy for one moment pursuing creature loves, unmindful of my one true friend? And every act of which I am capable with mind, heart or hand, should be done for Him in return, for the true lover cannot think of or love anything but his beloved.

CHAPTER VI.

SHARING IN THE DIVINE NATURE.

FRIENDSHIP, as we have seen, must be based on some sort of equality between the friends. And, on first thought, this seems an impossible condition between God and man. The aborigines of Alaska considered the Supreme Being, in whom they believed, so exalted and remote from earth that He could take no interest in man and his concerns.

The infinitude of God, it is true, places Him at an immeasurable distance from us. When we consider His immensity as evidenced by the works of His hands and reflect that the heavens and earth cannot contain Him, and at the same time realize that man is but an earth-crawler, limited to time and space, an inhabitant of an insignificant planet amongst myriad suns, an animal consorting with other lower animals, called brutes, the imagination is appalled at the contrast. When we endeavor to compare the plenitude of power, majesty, sublimity, knowledge, wisdom and goodness of the Eternal Being with the dim reflections of these

perfections visible in man, the Creator seems further removed from us than worm from highest angel, than the globe we dwell on from the ultimate bounds of the universe.

And even these comparisons fail to express the incomprehensibility of God's greatness, for, after all, between highest and lowest creature there is some proportion in being, since they both have created entity in common. But between the Infinite Creator, Who is the perfection of Increate Being, and the greatest of His creatures, which has no existence or even entity of its own independent of Him, and hence of itself is nothingness, there can be no basis of comparison.

Philosophers tells us that they can find no identically common notion between the infinite and finite, and so, when they call God a Being and man a being, they do not use the terms in precisely the same meaning, but analogically, as they say. And that this is true is evidenced in the very writing of the preceding sentence, where "Being" as applied to God is spelled with a capital B, and referring to man, with a small letter, thus showing that the word is applied to each in a differing sense. A man and a horse can both be denominated animals in the same signification, an angel and a clod of earth can both be styled creatures;

but Creator and creature cannot be yoked together even in the mind under a perfectly common concept. No identical notion is found in both. Whatever man has is not of himself, but of God, and that only by participation and in a limited manner, by a sort of imaging forth, as the reflection of a star from the surface of a placid lake.

Now, since man cannot entertain friendship for what is far beneath him in the scale of being, with a tree or insect, how can God be the friend and companion of what is relatively still further below Him? Yea, the whole world in comparison with the Creator is not so much as a grain of sand, as a drop of morning dew that gathers on the blade of grass and vanishes before the rising sun. Reason, then, left to itself, it would appear, could never come to know that God is man's friend. It can understand of its own power that the Creator is the master and owner of creation that He Who is and was and always will be, is Lord and Sovereign of all things and that He is good and a rewarder to man, the work of His hands. But here it stops.

Revelation, the twin light of man's intellect, then comes in to tell us further of the Creator's love for intelligent creatures, that "He hath first loved us," that "God is charity, and he that abideth in charity abid-

eth in God, and God in him.''[1] Again, we hear Christ's solemn words at the Last Supper, ''If anyone love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make our abode with him.''[2] How all this can be, how God can deign to enter into friendship and amity with so lowly a creature as man, is beyond our comprehension—it is a mystery springing from the heights and depths of the Divine Goodness, and inscrutable to reason. But what is revealed we know to be true. We accept it as a fact.

For God to love us with charity we must be worthy. But by mere nature we were and are all unworthy. No one can truly love an unworthy object, least of all the Divine Being, to Whose goodness it is repugnant to fasten its love except on what is holy and pure. How, then, could God reconcile His overweening desire to take complacency in us with our unworthiness, since He loved us before we were able to return this affection, ages and ages before we existed or were thought of save in the Divine mind? He must in His omniscient sanctity devise some means of elevating us, of raising us to a plane of holiness where

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[1] 1 John iv, 16.
[2] John xiv, 23.

He could love us, cherish us as His very own, without degrading Himself.

He found a way of infusing into the soul a supernatural goodness, which makes it lovable to Him, and at the same time enables it to love Him in return after the manner of true friendship.

This marvellous elevation of the soul in the supernatural order is effected by grace. It is a favor not due to man, a gift transcending the rights and exigencies of all created nature, human or angelic, and hence something that the mere natural man could never have coveted in his wildest dreams of fancy. This grace brings us into a companionship and similarity with God. Listen to the words of St. Peter: "By whom He hath given us most great and precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine nature."[3] Every day the priest prays at Mass: "Grant us to be sharers in His Divinity, Who deigned to become a sharer in our humanity." Again, in the Preface of the Mass said on the feast of the Ascension, we read that Christ was taken up visibly to heaven, "to make us sharers in His Divinity."

What do all these strange expressions mean? How

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[3] 2 Peter i, 4.

are we to share in or partake of the Divine nature? We know what it is to become sharers or partakers in human nature—it is to become a man; and so God the Son, on taking flesh and assuming human nature, is said to have become Man. Of course, we understand that our participation by sanctifying grace in the Divine nature does not make us cease to be creatures, or lose our identity, and much less make us or turn us into God. Such a though would be pantheistic and blasphemous.

The mystery, then, is still unsolved; for mystery there is in this sublime assimilation of our soul to the Deity, a mystery, which all the theologians who speak of it admit is above our comprehension. But, though we cannot understand this participation in the Divine nature, we believe it, for it is plainly writ in Scripture, and taught in the schools.

The Council of Trent[4] defines: "If anyone saith that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favor of God, let

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[4] Sess. 6, Can. ii.

him be anathema." From this and other passages in the decrees of the Council, we learn that grace is an internal gift, inherent in the soul, a new supernatural birth or life, by which it is made pleasing to God. With the inpouring of grace the Holy Spirit is also given to the soul, and He comes to take up His dwelling in it, but this indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of which we shall speak later, is not grace, but something different from, and added to it. Some theologians have thought that the participation of the just in the Divine nature meant merely the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. But this opinion is not the one generally held, nor that which approves itself to St. Thomas and Suarez.

In fact, it is hard to conceive how companionship, however intimate, with the Person of the Holy Ghost, or with the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, would be a sharing or participation in the nature of God. If one were an intimate companion and associate of a king, he would not thereby be a sharer in his kingly nature or office. He would be close to the king's person, but in no way, except perhaps figuratively, could he be called a king or kingly. Whereas grace, on the contrary, is more than an intimacy with the Divine Persons, it is a participation of the Divine nature, and so frequent and constant is this assertion

amongst the theologians, according to Ripalda,[5] that it cannot be denied without temerity. "Since grace," says St. Thomas, "surpasses all power of created nature, from the fact that it is nothing else than a certain *participation in the Divine nature* which surpasses every other nature, it can be produced by none but God.[6]

In conformity with this doctrine the Fathers also interpret the sixth verse of the eighty-first psalm: "I have said: You are gods and all of you the sons of the Most High." And their interpretation gains strength from the use Christ made of the text against His enemies, saying, "is it not written in your law, I said you are gods? If He called them gods to whom the word of God was spoken and the Scripture cannot be broken; do you say of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world; Thou blasphemest because I said I am the Son of God?"

Here Christ to prove His own real Divinity argues from the statement of Scripture that the friends of God are also gods, and, to make the argument more cogent, insists that what the Scripture says must be true. Now, if Scripture in using this term meant only that the just were gods in a vague figurative way,

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[5] Disp. ult. S. 7.

[6] Summa, 1a 2ae, Quaest. 112, art. 1.

would not Christ's reasoning lose its force? It would be equivalent to something like this: "If all good men can in a shadowy and metaphorical, though incorrect sense, be styled gods, I have a right to call myself absolutely and literally the natural Son of God." Such a line of reasoning seems devoid of strength and cogency. Let us, however, state the argument in this fashion: "A person or being is denominated from his nature, as a man is called human because he has human nature. Hence the just man, who shares the Divine nature, can truly and properly, though only analogically, be called godlike or a god. How much more right then have I, who am born of the Father, and have His identical nature, to be called God!" Here the reasoning is plain, direct and convincing, and apparently what Christ had in mind.

The fact, then, remains, however we understand it, and subtlety cannot refine it away, that the just man shares in the Divine nature. So Scripture teaches and the Church repeats.

CHAPTER VII.

"YE ARE GODS."

N ARRIVING at this point, the theologians of the Church, fearful almost of the sublimity of their doctrine, hasten to explain that the grace which makes man share the Divine nature, is but an image or representation of the Godhead. This explanation they glean from Genesis,[1] where it is said that man was created to the image and likeness of God. St. Thomas, commenting on the expression, "*to* the image," says it means an approach to God, and not equality with Him.

However, this imaging forth of God in the sanctified soul is a closer approximation to the Deity than anything we can dream or imagine here on earth. Even he of the eagle eye, St. John, despaired of comprehending it when he said, "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see

[1] i, 26.

Him as He is."[2] No wonder the Fathers of the Church, carried away by ardor and enthusiasm, speak of sanctifying grace as the "deification" of the soul, and say that we partake of the Divinity as the molten iron of fire, as the air of sunshine.

St. Basil indulges in this rhapsody: "As bright and translucent bodies, when touched by the rays of the sun, become themselves brilliant above measure and a new source of light; so also souls, breathed upon and illumined by the Spirit, themselves become filled with the Spirit and send forth grace to others. . . . Hence is your likeness to God."[3] Again he says of this participation of the Divine nature: "So also the Spirit has life in Himself, and they who share in it live in a divine way, having a divine and heavenly life."[4] And St. Thomas says, "only God can deify by communicating participation with the Divine nature through a certain sharing of His likeness; as it is impossible that anything but fire should ignify."[5]

This marvellous sharing in the Divine nature, of which the Fathers, theologians and mystics speak in such glowing and almost unintelligible words, is su-

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[2] 1 John iii, 2.
[3] de Spir. S. c. 9.
[4] Cont. Eunom. l. 5, Sub. fin.
[5] Sum. 1a. 2ae, Q. 112, art. 1.

pernatural, the effect of grace. Grace being supernatural surpasses, as we have seen, all that is conceivably due to mere nature, whether human or angelic. Hence, spiritual writers inform us that a child, lisping a prayer under the impulse of grace, would perform a greater and more sublime act than any angel by its mere natural powers could effect, even though it were capable of draining the seas or reversing the earth's orbit.

According to the Scriptural teaching, grace is a new life, by which man is born again, puts on the new man, and is made to live in Christ. This new life is above nature and belongs to the divine order, and hence it must possess powers and virtues that are supernatural. It sees no longer by reason alone, but by faith; it hopes for things unseen, and loves with charity. Faith, hope, and charity, together with the other infused virtues, are the train of heaven-sent powers that hold sway and dominion within the regenerated soul.

Faith opens before our eyes a whole realm of wondrous truth which is sealed to merely natural vision. The little child, the dull and unschooled, the rustic and the peasant, illumined by faith, live in a world of sense and sound and beauty of which the most learned unchristian philosopher has no knowledge.

"Behold!" says the Christian child to the unbelieving sage, "the beauteous prospect stretching before us, the supernal light that gilds field and flower and stream, the divine reflections mirrored in the shining orbs of heaven; listen to the harmonies coming to us through the opening gates of pearl; see the hosts of spirits flying through the air and hovering above the cities, behold God everywhere, in the growing trees, the rushing wind and moving clouds—" "Nay, child," replies the unbeliever, "I see none of these things; they do not exist." "Alas!" mourns the child, "poor man, he is blind."

Yea, blind are all they who have not the divine life, and deaf to the world of the deified spirit. They live in a lower world. They are like the sightless fish that swim in dark, subterranean pools, never dreaming that their inky dwelling place could be transformed by the magic rays of sunlight into translucent depths of crystal, where water-plants build mimic forests, gay colors gleam, and glancing waves, rising and falling in rhythmic motion, break into snow foam and disappear in iridescent spray. Such men are truly blind, and, worst of fates, they think they have clearest vision; they cannot understand, and imagine themselves wise. And what they cannot know, neither can they love. The beauteous things which God spreads

out to awaken in His chosen ones desire and love, stir no emotion in their hearts; and, when they follow the wistful gaze of God's children towards objects of spiritual vision, they see but leaden clouds closing in a wintry horizon.

Grace, on the contrary, gives knowledge of things unseen, sets the strings of the heart vibrating with a love not born of earth, and makes life one long melody of sweetness. This Divine gift causes the life currents of the soul to run full with the joy of perpetual youth, and gives buoyancy of unimpaired strength and vigor. This deified existence rises above the fogs of earth into the region of perennial sunshine.

And this participation of the Deity necessarily implies supernatural beauty. We can all appreciate material beauty. It reveals itself in the verdure of hill and plain, in the long roll of the ocean wave, in the rainbow, in the transforming hues of the sunset, in the graceful flight of the bird and the comely features of youth. But a higher form of beauty adorns spiritual things. The intellectual soul, says the Jesuit theologian Lessius, is of such wondrous beauty and perfection that were it known as it is in itself it would seem a kind of divinity, and the contemplation of it would fill the mind with incredible pleasure.

Marvellous as is the natural beauty of the soul, how shall we describe its supernatural loveliness which it has by divine grace. God is the fountain-head of beauty, and like to Him is the sanctified soul. Its brightness makes the moon and stars "grow pale with envy." It surpasses in charm the delicate texture and hue and form of all the flowers that blow; the fragrance of its virtues ravishes all hearts. Even in this life, God has often been pleased to let the heavenly perfume of virtue escape to the bodies of His saints, and fill the room or house in which they lived, and scent whatever they touched. For nearly two hundred years have the relics of Blessed Mary of the Angels been distilling an exquisite odor that is not of earth.

Verily, so ravishing is the celestial beauty of the deified soul that not only are other creatures, our brothers and sisters, the saints and angels, transported by it, but God Himself seems carried away by love for it. For these created charms were "drawn by Love's own hand, by Love Himself in love." The Deity formed and fashioned the sanctified soul with all that could please and delight. And then Love Himself fell in love with it. Listen to Solomon's Canticle, that divine love-song wherein God sings to the soul, His beloved, "the extravagances of His love."

"I sleep, and my heart watcheth; the voice of my beloved knocking: Open to me, my sister, my love, my undefiled." And the soul, the spouse of God, responds to His whispers of affection: "I opened the bolt of my door to my Beloved; but He had turned aside, and was gone. . . . I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved that you tell him I languish with love."[6]

Now, Christian soul, see to what heights of love you are called. God is Love, and you, too, are partaker of His nature. God is your Divine Lover, and like all lovers, knows no measure in His affection and gifts. In this life the veils are drawn, but in the world to come you will see your Beloved face to face. You are now the dearest child of God, what you shall be doth not now appear; but you know that when He shall come you shall be like to Him, for you shall see Him as he is.

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[6] Cant. v, 2, 5, 8.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHILDREN OF GOD.

FROM man's participation in the Divine nature results a special relationship, the existence of which might not have been suspected. Friendship or love between men is of varied degrees of nearness and intensity. The bond of affection is generally much closer between members of the same family, between brother and sister, parent and child, than where no blood relationship exists.

We have often heard that we are children of God, and in the prayer taught by Christ Himself, and which we say every day, we address God as "Our Father," and toward Him we have a real filial affection. But, if taken unawares and asked whether these expressions were to be understood literally, whether they implied anything more than the existence of an intimate mutual affection between us and God, we should perhaps be at a loss to answer. Is there any real sense in which we are God's children and members of His family?

In a text before quoted the Apostle of love tells us: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God. . . . Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God."[1] St. Paul sent the following inspired words to the Romans: "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . You have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry Abba (Father)"[2] Numerous other quotations referring to the relation of our sonship to God might be given, but these will suffice for our present purpose. The Council of Trent calls justification "a translation to the state of grace, and of the adoption of the sons of God."[3]

The reiterated assertion of Scripture and Council that we are the adopted sons of God, without any attempt to gloss its meaning, seems to imply that this relationship between God and the just man is something more than a mere figure of speech, that it is true in some genuine sense. The Eternal Son is generated by the Father, from Whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named. But this perfect Sonship is, of course, for a multiplicity of reasons, precluded to

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[1] 1 John, iii, 1, 2.
[2] Rom. viii, 14, 15.
[3] Sess. 6, Cap. 4.

creatures. Amongst men one is called a son, who is begotten of an earthly father and receives from him a similar nature.

There is also a relation in civil society called adoptive sonship, by which a stranger child, without claim of its own, is received into the family of its adopted father, and given all the affection and privileges belonging to one who is a child by nature. This adoptive sonship, as in the natural relation, also requires a similarity of nature between father and child, since in no proper sense could a man adopt an angel as his child, and much less a mere animal. But this common nature the adopted child does not receive from its reputed father; it has it previous to adoption.

The legal father agrees to regard a child as his own, and gives it the same love and rights as though he had been responsible for its coming into the world. On the other hand, the child acts toward the father as though it had received also its being from him, together with all the other benefits it obtains at his hands. Adoption thus analyzed reduces itself to a social and legal fiction constituting paternity and sonship, as far as a free and gratuitous compact can replace the natural relation. Thus reliable authors consider it.

Between us and God there certainly exists at least

this kind of relationship. The texts we have quoted establish this much beyond cavil. The Holy Ghost Himself is witness, according to St. Paul, that we are the sons of God. Here are his words: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons (children) of God, and if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ."[4] The testimony of the Holy Spirit cannot be called in question, and He here testifies that we are God's children, and in consequence heirs of God, as children are of their father. He adds that we share our inheritance with Christ, Who is the natural Son of God; and hence it must follow that—if we are sons and Christ is Son and we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ, Who is the natural heir of His Father—Christ, our elder brother, and we must form one large family of children under our Father in heaven.

Adoptive sonship amongst men requires, as we have seen, a common nature between father and child, and it must exist before the adoption; whereas, before our Divine adoption we have not this similarity with God, we acquire it only by the infusion of grace, which causes us to participate in the Divine nature. By grace, then, we become God's adopted children, re-

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[4] Rom. viii, 16, 17.

ceiving a similarity of nature with Him, and we are gratuitously, that is without merit on our part, accepted into His family, dowered with a father's love and affection and given a right to our heavenly inheritance in the next life. Is anything still wanting to enable us to say, "Abba, Father"?

And yet further depths of God's love and tenderness for us remain unsounded. Not only are we called adoptive children of God, but in many places of Scripture we are simply styled sons or children without any apparent qualification or restriction. "Of His own will hath He begotten us," says St. James,[5] in explanation of which St. Thomas remarks, "an adoptive son is sometimes said to be begotten on account of the spiritual generation, which is gratuitous and not natural."

When Nicodemus came by night, Christ taught him that man must be born again of the Holy Ghost. The ruler in Israel, sorely puzzled at this teaching, asked how a man could be born a second time, and received the reply, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."[6] St. John, who recorded this interview with Nicodemus, afterwards repeats the same doctrine, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. And

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[5] i, 18.
[6] John iii.

every one that loveth Him Who begot, loveth him also who is born of Him. [7]

In all these places of Holy Writ and numerous others, insistence is laid on a new birth of man by which he is born of God and becomes His offspring through the action of the Holy Spirit. This is not easily intelligible to the human mind, as was evident in the case of Nicodemus, who, though skilled in the religious teaching of his day, found it hard to comprehend. The difficulty is increased by the fact that our sonship of God is not now apparent, as we learn from St. John, and that our finished resemblance to Him will only be perfected in the vision of glory.

One thing, however, which we glean from the teaching of Scripture is, that our relation to God is far more intimate than that between the human father and his adopted child. For, God in becoming our Father gives us a new nature and being, by which we become new creatures, are begotten to new life, and born again of the Spirit. This new life which we receive is not, it is true, God's substance, and not even a substance at all, and so, according to St. Augustine, we are not God's natural children; but it is a new principle of life, superadded to the substance of our

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[7] 1 John v, 1.

soul, making us resemble Him and partake of His nature. For sonship, says Cardinal Mazzella,[8] two things are required, to have a common nature with another, and to receive it from him. And this is amply verified in the infusion of grace, which is a physical and supernatural participation of the Divine nature, communicated to us by God.

While human adoption, then, gives rise to no real relation of sonship, since it makes no intrinsic change in the child, and is founded only on convention, the Divine adoption changes us intrinsically; and hence our new relation with God, being founded on this real and intrinsic change or justification, brings us much closer to God than would any mere legal adoption.

God, then, is our Father, not merely figuratively, but in a certain true sense, and we are His children with the right to call Him "Father." In fact, can we not justly say that God is our Father by a greater title than our earthly parent? For, aside from the fact that He does not, like our human father, communicate to us His formal substantial nature, everything we have received from our parents is supereminently the gift also of God's omnipotence and love; so that their gifts to us are His as well. More-

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[8] de Grat. Par. 1024.

over, our soul, being immediately created by God, is His direct gift. Thus, our parents are but His agents and ministers in our regard. And as we owe them affection, gratitude and obedience, we owe all these multiplied a hundredfold to God; so that Christ Himself did not hesitate to say that he who loves father or mother more than Him is not worthy of Him.

The parenthood itself of our father and mother is a gift from His hand, so that it might be said that we, their children, are pledges of His love, loaned to them for a time until He takes them and us to Himself. Earthly parentage is but a shadow of God's eternal paternity, and seems intended to be but temporary in its principal effects. It serves for a while to bind husband and wife in closer union, and it benefits the children in their nonage until they are able to care for themselves.

But God's fatherhood has only its beginning in this life; in the next, we shall continue to be His dependent children, when our resemblance to Him shall be perfected and appear in all its splendor and glory. Children, whether natural or adopted, are heirs of their parents and have a right to their share of the paternal possessions. We too shall have the inheritance of eternal glory, nor need we wait, as earthly children do for the death of their father, before suc-

ceeding to it. We shall enter into our inheritance on the coming of our Father, at the dissolution of the body, provided we be worthy.

See, then, the wealth of charity our Father hath bestowed upon us in making us His children, conformable to the image of His Son, Who is the first-born amongst many brothers. And He, our Brother, has gone to prepare for us a mansion in His Father's house, and when our place is ready, He will come again and take us that where He is we also may be.[9]

"For though the daye be never so long,
At last the bells ringeth to evensong."[10]

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[9] John xiv, 2, 3.

[10] Stephen Hawes, in the beginning of the 16th century.

CHAPTER IX.

CHILDREN AT HOME.

INCE we Christians are children of God, the natural conclusion follows that we form one large family on earth, and dwell together in our Father's house. And yet something seems wanting to the perfection of the family circle. We are not as happy as we should expect to be. First of all, we do not see our Father with our bodily eyes, at times He seems so very far away, and earth is dreary and desolate, not at all like the cheery, joyful place we should wish. And many things we covet are denied us, so that perhaps the thought comes unbidden to our mind that we cannot really be so dear to God's heart, if indeed He has not forgotten us entirely.

All this leads to the reflection that most people on earth are destined to dwell in two natural homes, one as children where they enjoy their parents' love and protection, and the other where they preside as parents themselves and bestow on their offspring the same care and affection they previously received. The

first home is an apprenticeship for the second. Childhood is a necessary preparation for the proper discharge of the responsibilities of parenthood. And this is pretty much all of life for most people—to be children themselves, and in turn prepare other children to take their place when they have gone.

Now, as we have two natural homes, we have also two supernatural homes, and the first in preparation for the second. Our second supernatural home will be in heaven, where never for a moment during endless ages shall we be out of sight of the blissful vision of our Father's face. We have also in this life a true supernatural home, where we live united with our Father by grace; but as our present existence is a probation and trial, wherein we must labor and toil and suffer and get ready for translation into the kingdom of light, it is necessary that a veil be drawn around the sunshine of God's presence, lest we become too enamored of our earthly existence. Were it always summer in our spiritual home on earth, did we ever bask in the light of His love, and taste the delights of His affection, we should almost forget we were in exile and cease to yearn for our eternal home.

No, earth at its best is but a place of trial and purgation, it was never meant to be the abiding place of the imprisoned soul, but rather a cage, against whose

bars it must ever beat its wings in the vain endeavor to fly away into never-ending freedom. But though we dwell in a vale of tears, yet are we not entirely without comfort. We have faith to enable us to see and know God, to teach us we are His loved children. In all the incidents of life we perceive His controlling hand, tempering the cold and heat, sheltering us under His protecting mantle. What is there we have not received from Him? He has chosen us to be favored members of His household, made us His by baptism and the other sacraments. Night and day through the wearisome years He is thinking of us and our affairs, planning for our advantage, sometimes sending joys, and then allowing trials to beset us that we may be forced to seek relief in His fatherly arms.

And on our part how ungrateful we have been, straying so often from His love and counsels, and placing our happiness in objects outside of Him! Perhaps, even, we have acted the prodigal's part, and gone into the far-off country of sin; and, when we returned with bleeding feet and naked back, we found Him waiting for us at the turn of the road, to welcome us with outstretched arms and the kiss of reconciliation.

Home is a place of protection and safety. In the presence of danger the child runs to the paternal arms

as naturally as the chickens to the wings of the parent hen when the threatening hawk circles in the sky. And in this life the child of God is ever exposed to a multiplicity of dangers. The siren voice of pleasure is ever striving to lure it to destruction, the world tries to seduce it with false and fatal charms, the flesh too is always claiming more than its due and rising against the spirit, while the prince of darkness and the noonday devil are watching for point of vantage. But the child who abides in its Father's home is panoplied with triple armor from which the arrows of temptation fall harmless. The angels hover over it, and guard it from harm. The Lord is its shield and safety, and whoso trusteth in Him will be saved from the enemies that lurk by his path and dig pitfalls beneath his feet.

When Solomon succeeded to his kingdom, he complained in prayer that he was but a child in wisdom and knew not even "how to go out and come in."[1] He thus in his humility compared himself to an infant, for it is a very small child indeed who knows not how to leave and enter the house. The child claims as its birthright the freedom of the home, it goes in and out at pleasure. A stranger cannot enter, or visit the master, without complying with

[1] 3 Kings iii, 7.

certain formalities. He must at least knock, and bide the invitation to enter. So custom has decreed in acknowledged deference to the occupant's right to privacy and seclusion. But the child throws ceremony to the winds, never imagining its presence to be intrusive or undesired; it runs to its parents in every difficulty, making known its wants and prattling away all the happenings of its little world.

This should be the attitude of God's child. It should never be out of His sight. At every hour of the day and night it has access to Him, in direst need or trivial want, and there is but little formality between them. Should danger threaten, temptation rise, or doubt occur, at once a cry for help or counsel; and when the evil is passed or the counsel given, a mutual smile of love is exchanged. The true child of its Heavenly Father lives ever in His presence, takes not a step, begins no work or plan, without first consulting Him.

Nor does it let one hour of the day pass without speaking some words of affection to Him. The mutual love of parent and child is kept alive by conversation, and the topic of it matters little. The petty incidents of home and school afford abundant material. The child of God must also converse with Him, and this conversation on the child's part is called prayer,

and the topic of this prayer may be anything that comes into its life and becomes a subject of interest or concern to it. Our affairs, intentions, aims, aspirations, desires, anxieties and needs, may all be subjects of intimate converse with God, in which we ask from Him light, direction or aid. It is, indeed, a duty for us to pray, a moral necessity, just as to see and hear, to eat and sleep are bodily necessities and duties. The healthy body, however, finds it a pleasure rather than a task to yield to these cravings, and we, too, if true to God, will regard prayer as a blessed necessity of the spirit.

"Lord, teach us to pray,"[2] said the Apostles to Jesus. And we like them must learn to pray; but if we have the heart of a simple child toward our Father in heaven it will not be hard to con our lesson. The saints found their difficulty, not in praying, but rather in learning to combine work with prayer, that is, so to keep their mind on God as not to interfere with the proper discharge of their other duties. The Apostle would have us pray without ceasing. And this we shall never be able to do unless we are like children, whose sole aim is to do their parent's will, to accomplish the duties confided to them merely out of a desire to please father or mother.

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[2] Luke xi, 1.

"Walk before Me, and be perfect,"[3] was the injunction of God to Abraham, which signified that the patriarch was to perform his actions and regulate his motives as though God Himself were looking on. This indeed is a compendious and effective mode of attaining holiness, since no one would wish to displease or offend God in His actual presence. One does not need to be prompted to his best behavior before a king or other person of dignity. And we can scarce conceive a dutiful child committing serious wrong before its parents; so that it would certainly be a very short cut to perfection, always to realize by faith that our heavenly Father is ever present to us, watching us with love, and that His smile of affection will be turned into a frown of displeasure by our misdoing. The displeasure of father or mother is sufficient to cloud the sunshine of a child's soul and bring on a shower of tears; and, similarly, to him who walks by faith the disfavor of his Father in heaven changes sweet to bitter, joy to sadness.

Children have an artless way of speaking of *our* house, *our* home, *our* possessions, when they refer to what is owned by their father. Nor does it occur to them to doubt the propriety of thus speaking, for they constantly see the use and proprietorship of the house-

[3] Gen. xvii, 1.

hold and its chattels shared in by all the members of the family. And the child of God may justly adopt a similar manner of speaking in regard to its Heavenly Father's possessions. Nothing will please Him more than for us to enter into a spirit of our family partnership with Him. But can it truthfully be said that what belongs to God belongs also to us? Is not this an undue straining of the rights of sonship? Listen to the sweeping words of St. Paul: "All things are yours, whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; for all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."[4]

Everything, says St. Paul, is ours—Paul and Cephas, representing the saints and angels of God and their ministry; this world with whatever it contains of beauty and worth; yea, and life itself and death, and whatever is present, and whatever the future on earth or in heaven will bring—they are all ours. Wondrous munificence of God, to give His children all possible possessions, to make no reservations! It is as if the Apostle had said, "Go, child, into the marts of the wide world, rifle them of their treasures, choose of the best productions of nature and art, gems of purest water, and the richest attire.

[4] 1 Cor. iii, 22, 23.

Build for yourself the most splendid of palaces and gather into it whatever may please the eye or delight the heart." The child would be apt to reply, "Can it be that I have power and right to do all this? It seemeth beyond understanding." And still the Apostle declares that all this has been given to us, and he further spreads before our gaze the treasures that Omnipotence has gathered for us in the endless age to come. And mark, he does not say this superabundant wealth will be ours, but it is. Some things are ours only by anticipation. We now have the ownership of them; the usufruct will be ours only at our majority, on our entrance into the kingdom of glory. But everything is now ours in a spiritual sense, to derive from it what good and benefit we may for our soul.

But not yet is the full force of St. Paul's glowing words disclosed. If all things belong to us and we belong to Christ, and Christ is God's, then Christ too owns all things, and so does God. And thus God and Christ and we form a glorious partnership to whom pertains dominion of heaven and earth. And all who are free with the liberty of the sons of God can rightly speak of *our* heaven, and *our* earth, *our* angels and saints. Nor is this domain of ours confined merely to what exists, but it extends to all pos-

sible creatures which God will ever call into being. Our sonship gives us control even over the Most High Himself and all His attributes, so that, in a reverent way, we may be permitted to claim a share in them, and speak of His omnipotence, justice, mercy and love as ours. Surely, He who has promised to give Himself will not withhold control of the attributes which belong to Him or rather which He is, since between Him and them there is no real distinction.

And this modified dominion over God and His powers, which will be the prerogative of all in heaven, is manifested at times even in the present life, for some of His great servants began to exercise it here. They used almost at will the sway of the Creator over nature and made its laws submissive to them. At their command the sun stood still, fire ceased to burn, the water became solid underfoot, pestilence ceased, and the dead returned to life. St. Colette, for instance, is said to have raised at least one hundred persons to life. And this is but in conformity with Christ's own promise that "In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover."[5]

[5] Mark xvi, 18.

In the vicissitudes of family life it often happens that children must run for comfort and consolation to their parents. The child of God, too, often meets trials and tribulations in the purgative way of his earthly pilgrimage. When trouble and affliction press upon him, and sickness and weariness of soul sap his courage, and the world turns upon him a stony gaze, when friendship seems but a name, and the heavens themselves close down like a dome of brass, when foes rage without, and passions rebel from within, whither shall he turn? Suffering, pain and sadness, toil and anguish and disappointed hopes, coldness and indifference from others, and, worst of all, interior fear and uncertainty, are the ever-recurring lot of all. These things are the test of the soul's fidelity, the furnace of affliction in which must be burnt away the dross of sin and selfishness.

But the stress of trial and purgation we are not left to bear alone. In our anguish we can turn to our heavenly Father, Who will clasp us to His arms and kiss away our tears. "Courage!" He will whisper, "*our* tribulation will soon pass away, it will not last for long. The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us." With these and similar words of consolation will our Father assuage our grief and pain. Happy we, the children of such a Father.

CHAPTER X.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS MINE.

HILDREN of the same parentage belong to one family and are called brothers and sisters. All the members of the human race, since they are sprung from Adam and Eve, form but one family. Of whatever race or tribe they be, of whatsoever condition in life, whether kings or peasants, rich or poor, white, brown or black, they can all trace their lineage back to the same ancestry and claim kinship in blood.

But Christians are even more closely related. Being regenerated in grace and born anew into the likeness of their heavenly Father, they are His children by a very special title. Hence the Apostles, Saints Paul, John, James and Peter were inspired to address the Christians as "brethren." St. Paul bids the faithful love "with the charity of brotherhood, with honor preventing one another."[1] And how he overflows

[1] Rom. xii, 10.

with affection when he calls the Philippians "My dearly beloved brothers and most desired, my joy and my crown."[2]

The foundation of our brotherhood, St. Paul bases on the fact that we are made conformable to the image of God's Son: "that He might be the first-born amongst many brothers."[3] Christ is by nature the Son of God, and we by grace are like unto Christ, so that He is our elder brother; both He and we having the same Father. If we Christians, then, all have the same brother, Christ, and the same Father, God, we are truly brothers and sisters one to another. From this beautiful doctrine it follows that amongst Christians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."[4]

Now there would seem to be no need of a precept for brothers to love one another. Nature begets this mutual affection in them. And yet estrangement may and sometimes does occur between members of the same household. When this is the case, such persons may possibly be more closely bound by friendship with those outside the family circle than with their

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[2] iv, 1.
[3] Rom. viii, 29.
[4] Gal. iii, 28, 29.

own kindred. And so love, rather than blood relationship, becomes in them an index of brotherhood.

Hence, mutual affection must be the distinguishing mark of brethren in the faith. And so necessary is this that Christ made it a law—"A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you."[5] This is the vital test or criterion by which He wished men to recognize His disciples.

Both St. John and St. Paul, after the example of our Lord Himself, call the Christians "little children." There is quite a difference between little and older children. The breviary, on the feast of St. Jerome Aemilianus, proposes for our meditation the incident of the mothers bringing their children to Jesus for His blessing, and the touching commentary of St. John Chrysostom thereon. The child, according to the golden-tongued Doctor, retains no memory of injuries, and, though punished by its mother, still clings to her. And if you show it a queen crowned with jewels and gorgeously attired, it will not leave its mother in her frayed and patched gown. It chooses things not for their richness or elegance but from affection, and desires only what is needful. When it has sufficient milk, it leaves the breasts. Money and

[5] John xiii, 34.

the things men prize it cares nothing for, nor is it enticed by the charm of human beauty.

And we must become like little children, so Christ tells us, if we would enter into the kingdom of heaven. We must become lowly and humble in our own eyes, simple, innocent and straightforward, setting aside the wisdom of the world and the prudence of the flesh. No matter how old we are in years, we must retain the candor and simplicity of childhood in our conduct toward others, and discard worldly standards of judgment which are largely based on what is artificial and adventitious. The world pays court to the rich and prosperous and influential, disregarding the poor, the unfortunate and helpless. But the true Christian will be no respecter of persons. He will see Christ in all men and particularly in the brotherhood, and love them for His sake. He will take to heart the lesson conveyed in the hypothetical description of St. James, who represents two men entering an assembly, the one wearing a gold ring and clad in splendid attire, the other poor and in mean dress. When the rich man enters, all rise and offer him a seat of honor; but the poor man is unnoticed, until some one says "stand there!" or "sit under my footstool!"[6]

One of the pleasures of children is the companion-

[6] St. James ii, 2, 3.

ship of those of their own age. Hence, an only child misses one of the ordinary joys of childhood, the company of brothers and sisters. Older persons, however kind and devoted, cannot be playmates to the young nor enter into fullest sympathy with them. The Christian is not doomed to be an only child, he has a vast multitude of brothers and sisters, all who are connected with him by faith. As the same manner of government and institutions, similarity of climate, soil and occupation form individuals into a caste or race or nation wherein there is a marked resemblance in bodily frame and traits of character; so, in members of the same family, who spring from a common stock and parentage, whose bodies are cast in the same mould, and whose characters unfold under the same environment, teaching and discipline, there results the closest kind of natural likeness. But the brotherhood of Christ, who are stamped with His likeness, have a still nearer resemblance.

We all have the same spiritual regeneration in grace, the common means of salvation, namely, the sacraments and the word of God, and finally the same destiny. We all gather at the Eucharistic table, and, partaking of one Bread, become ourselves "one bread, one body."[7] Thus closely united we are ever

[7] 1 Cor. x, 17.

sure of sympathy from others in sorrow and trial and of help in our undertakings. Our interests lie in common, the welfare of each being involved in that of all.

To show the close union that subsists between Christians, St. Paul calls them the members of Christ's mystical body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head.[8] And as in the human body the eye sees not for itself alone but for the whole body, as ear and hand and foot mutually minister to one another, and suffer and rejoice with a suffering or rejoicing member, so we Christians must minister to and assist, rejoice and suffer with, our fellow Christians.

From this close union with Christ, our Head, results the consoling doctrine of the Communion of Saints, by which all the members of this mystical body, the saints in heaven, the suffering souls in purgatory and the militant saints on earth are bound together under Christ's headship. There is between us all a communication of good. We mutually help and assist one another by our prayers and merits, so far as this is necessary or possible. And thus no Christian stands alone; he leans upon others stronger than himself. The sanctity of the saints in a measure is ours, to use and share, to emulate and imitate, to

[8] 1 Cor. xii, 12 flg.

intercede for us in heaven. We can draw on the spiritual treasury of the Church, in which are contained the infinite merits of Christ, the merits of His blessed Mother, and the superabundant satisfaction of the saints.

The heritage of the Church is ours, the preaching and witness of the Apostles, the teaching and writing of the Fathers, Doctors and theologians, the glorious struggles and victories of the martyrs and confessors, the mighty works of the religious orders and missionaries, the continuous testimony of miracles, the zeal, charity and penance of countless Christian men and women throughout the ages—they all belong to us, to instruct and uplift us and help toward our sanctification. The ministry of the priesthood is ours. The priest is given us to take away our sins, to feed us with the Bread of Life, instruct us in doctrine and open for us the gate of heaven.

The saints in heaven belong to us. Where we are they once were, and where they are we hope one day to be. They are now our willing servants. We call upon the saints and angels and they hear us, conveying our messages before God and doing our bidding. They keep watch and ward over us, protecting us from harm, and obtain favors untold for us in our pilgrimage through life. Thrice blessed are we to be mem-

bers of the great Christian family, to be part of that golden living chain of saints which reaches from heaven, wraps round the earth, and extends to the sombre precincts of purgatory.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

IN OUR discussion thus far, we have discovered that the just man is God's friend, a sharer in His nature, and His adoptive child. This would seem dignity enough for a human being, an intimacy as close as he could possibly have with the Deity; but there are still further unexplored depths of God's affection.

The expression "indwelling of the Holy Ghost" is doubtless familiar to us. St. Paul thus admonishes his little flock at Corinth, whom he had evangelized: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[1] He also tells the Christians of Rome: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us."[2] From these and other passages, taken in connection with their context, the Fathers and theologians draw the conclusion that the Third

[1] 1 Cor. iii, 16.
[2] Rom. v, 5.

Person of the Blessed Trinity dwells or abides within the soul of every just man.

It is evident that the mysterious work of justification or sanctification is in some way to be attributed to the Holy Spirit. The soul is formally justified by grace, and this grace was merited for us by Christ in His passion, but it is poured forth in us by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and He is sent to us by Them to sanctify us, as the Son was sent by His Father to redeem us. Christ promised His Apostles that He would ask the Father, and He would give them another Paraclete, to abide with them forever.[3]

But the work of the Holy Ghost is not done when He sanctifies us by pouring out charity in our heart. It is a wonderful thing that through Him we be made children of God and heirs of our heavenly inheritance, but this is not enough for Him Who is the substantial Love of Father and Son. When Love comes He cannot bear to leave; so He stays with us and by us. He takes up His abode within us, dwells with us, making our soul His home, from which He will never go out unless we cast Him forth by grievous sin. He remains united to us in some mysterious way, more intimate than we can imagine.

[3] John xiv, 16.

In order to understand, in our own poor human fashion, something of this ineffable indwelling in the soul, we may recall what theologians tell us of God's omnipresence. God, having the attribute of immensity by which He is present everywhere, is said to exist in all creatures by His power, His presence and His essence. St. Thomas endeavors to illustrate this triple mode of existence, by saying that a king, since his authority extends to his whole kingdom, can be said to be present in every part of it by his power. A man is present to everything within his sight; and where his substance or being is he exists according to his substance or essence.[4] Similarly, God is in all things by virtue of His power which reaches to every place and thing. He is actually present to all creatures, since all things are in His sight, plain and visible to Him; and finally He is in everything by His essence, which is the cause of their existence.

God is present in this threefold manner in all creatures, the wicked as well as the good. No one, not even by the greatest effort, can withdraw himself from God's sight or place himself beyond His power. But the habitation of the Holy Spirit within the soul is something more than all this, for the Fathers call it a special manner of existence, proceeding from His

[4] Summa 1 p. q. 8 art. 3.

gratuitous love—an abiding or indwelling presence. Some endeavor to explain this inhabiting within the soul as a special providence and care, by which the Spirit produces in it new supernatural effects, and illumines it with light and counsel that He does not give to all. No doubt singular favors and graces are given to all who live by grace, but these imply a new mode of Divine action within us rather than a new manner of presence; and this action, though flowing from His inexistence, does not constitute it.

Since, then, on the one hand, our identity cannot be lost, or assumed by the Spirit into personal or hypostatic union, and as, on the other, His inhabitation of the soul is closer and more intimate than that which flows from the Divine immensity, the Angelic Doctor explains it as a presence "of the Knowing in the known, of the Lover in the beloved." Later writers, notably Cardinals Franzelin and Mazzella, understand this to mean that the Holy Ghost indwells in the soul as a friend present to a friend and united with him by the bonds of love. While God is present everywhere, He is in some creatures only as the creator and conserver, in others as a judge; but in the just soul He is present under a new relation, as an intimate friend, taking pleasure in its company, benefiting it, loving it above its deserts and drawing its

love in return. This is, as it were, a clinging together of God and the soul like the mutual embrace of mother and child.

While ardent friendship draws friends to seek each other's companionship and presence, amongst men this propensity cannot always be satisfied. God, however, is able to do what is beyond the power of human friendship, and He has devised a way of always being present with those He loves. Never for a moment does He leave them, nor cease to bestow upon them tokens of affection. He also desires us to be ever present to Him, though our perfect and consummate enjoyment of God in this life is impossible; it will come only in the next, when we shall see Him as He is. But as grace is the inception of glory, so our friendship with God on earth is heavenly friendship begun.

The full realization of this marvellous inhabiting of the soul by God is beyond us. Were it not a revealed doctrine, it might seem to be but the product of an overwrought imagination; the dream of some saintly ecstatic, trying to portray in words a surpassing vision of supernal loveliness—or at most the poetical coloring of an abstract doctrine. But it is none of these, it is cold, literal fact; God is in me, and I in Him, now, at this moment and forever, always to remain one, one in union and affection; our life currents,

His and mine, flowing on in one stream toward the great ocean of happiness where for an eternity each will be lost in the love of the other. A veritable image and reflection of the ineffable union that subsists between the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. In the consummation of our union with God in heaven, time and space will seem to vanish for us, a moment of this sublimation into companionship with the Deity will lengthen into a century, and a century appear but as a moment. "One day in Thy courts is above thousands."[5] God forever in me and I in Him. This will be our rapturous state in glory; and it has begun already, albeit in an imperfect manner.

Are we to understand that this inhabiting of the soul is only by the Holy Ghost, or is it by the Three Divine Persons? It is true that the Persons of the Trinity cannot be separated, that by a mutual indwelling, which theologians call "circumincession," where one is, the others must be. Thus in the Incarnation, though only the Word became flesh, yet the Father and the Spirit were never absent from the Son of man. In this sense Father and Son certainly accompany the Holy Ghost in His mission of sanctification.

But, further, it is an axiom in theology that all

[5] Ps. 83, 11.

actions of God in creatures are common to the Three Persons. For, actions proceed from the nature of a being, and the Divine Nature is identical in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Hence all relations between God and creatures, save that arising from the hypostatic union in Christ, which is terminated in the Person of the Word, are common to all the Persons of the Trinity. But the union of God and the soul is not hypostatic, as is that of the Incarnate Word where two natures subsist in one Person. It is but an accidental union, the Holy Spirit and the soul each remaining distinct and retaining its personality.

According to this teaching the sanctification of the soul proceeds equally from the Three Divine Persons; and the indwelling of the Deity is alike of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And this is borne out by the words of Christ: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him."[6] Here it is promised that the Father and the Son will dwell in the just soul, just as in the passages quoted before this inhabitation is attributed to the Third Person. And this interpretation is contained in the writings of the Fathers. To quote St. Ambrose: "As we are the temple of the Father and the Son so also are we

[6] John xiv, 23.

of the Holy Spirit, not many temples but one temple, because a temple is of one Power." And St. Augustine tells us explicitly: "There is poured forth in our hearts the charity of God, by which the whole Trinity inhabits us."

Reflective minds may be moved to ask the question, why, then, the indwelling in the just soul and its sanctification, which are equally of the Three Divine Persons, are attributed so prominently to the Third Person, as though they were His peculiar office. A sufficient answer to this difficulty will be to recall the doctrine of the schools, that, in our mind, certain manifestations of the Godhead in creatures are closely allied with the incommunicable personality of one or other of the Divine Persons. Hence, by what is called "appropriation," we appropriate or ascribe to one Person what actually belongs to the Three. In other words, we predicate of a Person what is an attribute of the Divine Nature and hence common to the Three Persons. Thus, to the Father the work of creation and whatever involves a striking display of power are often imputed, since with the notion of unbegotten and unproduced, the idea of power and omnipotence is closely connected. To the Son, who is the Eternal Word begotten by knowledge, works of knowledge and wisdom such as the order of the universe are referred.

To the Holy Ghost, Who is the Substantial Love of Father and Son, we attribute special manifestations of love and goodness. From this we can understand how the sanctification of the soul, though pertaining alike to the Three Divine Persons, comes to be appropriated to the Holy Spirit, for it is preëminently a work of love and goodness.

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, then, come with power, wisdom and love to sanctify us, to take up Their abode within us as friend to friend, and give us some accidental share and participation, as much as we have capacity for, in Their Substantial Love and Sanctity. This is the mission of the Holy Ghost to the just soul.

CHAPTER XII.

GOD'S HOME WITHIN ME.

VERY natural question in connection with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is, why He is said not only to be, but to abide or dwell within the soul. To live or abide in a place means much more than a casual or temporary stay. The traveler, who is in need of shelter or refreshment, puts up in an inn or hotel, or camps by stream or wayside. But only a permanent place of abode is called a home.

Unfortunate, indeed, is the man without a home. Doomed to a nomadic existence, he is a wanderer on earth, a pariah amongst his fellows. He lacks completeness, for home is but a complement of one's being. Even the dog has its kennel, the sheep its fold, and the wild beast its lair, and Divine Wisdom tells us that the foxes have their holes and the birds of the air their nests. Man, having a body, must have a habitat for it, a domicile where he may find repose when weary, and store what is necessary for his manifold needs. In it he guards and secures his treasures, and places all that he prizes most.

In the home are ease and respite from toil, and all arrangements for comfort and convenience. Here the owner is master. At least one spot on earth is his where he can come and go at will, where he has full sway and his orders and commands are obeyed. Here he is sovereign, both lawmaker and executive. None can say him nay. Humble indeed and lowly this home may be, only a cabin on the moor, a hut in the wilderness, but at least it is sacred, safe from prying intrusion. The sacred character of the hearth was appreciated even by the pagans of old, who placed on guard by it the lares and penates; and in the middle age the privacy of the home was protected by wall and drawbridge and moat.

God, then, coming to dwell in the soul makes it His home. Men who can choose their abode pick out a location favored by nature's charms, where the wind blows free, under sunlit heavens, and nigh to forest, field and stream. Like a diamond in its setting, they place their retreat where weald and wold bloom fairest. Does God act differently? Has He less care of His home than man? Would He dwell in an unkept hovel open to wind and weather, where dust and grime contest His sway? No, the home of the Deity in which He would take pleasure, should be swept and garnished, pure and undefiled; hence He cannot dwell

in the sinful soul, which must be purged before His entrance of grievous sin.

But the most stately of manors, enclosed by park and hedge, is not always a home; nor even the cheeriest of bungalows, half-hid by climbing roses, and girt by velvet lawn and gay borders of flowers. These may be but a prison house to the fettered spirits of the unwilling tenants. A home must shelter contented inmates, and inmate and dwelling must grow until each becomes a part of the other as the turtle and its shell. A new house staring with fresh paint, and odorous of varnished furniture fresh from the factory, will need many a day of adjustment before it becomes a home. Memories must cling about it more redolent than its scented vines, and recollections of many a summer heat and wintry blast as well as of interior storms and gentle peace that alternately held sway within the hearts of the occupants.

Within our soul God dwells gladly. He is not imprisoned there against His will, and so it is His home where He loves to be. There He is unconstrained and free, perfectly at ease. He is master and owner in the house He has built without hands. No one there disputes His right to be and possess, to dispose and arrange at pleasure. There He plants and sows the seeds of virtue, and makes a garden enclosed, a

paradise of pomegranates, of spikenard and saffron, sweet cane and cinnamon, and in its midst a well of living waters. And when the winds of heaven blow through His garden of delight, they are laden with heavenly odors. God's fingers paint the lily, and deck the olive in green, but that might almost be styled apprentice work in comparison with the exquisite, ravishing beauty of virtue's bloom and fruit within the garden of the soul.

And what makes God a contented lodger within our soul? His ability to control and manage everything in it—the lights and shades and sounds, the domestic economy, order and arrangement. Everything there should be to His taste and liking—our thoughts, desires, wishes, aims and ambitions, the conversation and entertainment we provide Him. Above all, there must be a constant intercommunication of the offices of affection between Him and us. When love flies out of doors the home ceases to exist. To love and to be loved—this is the essence of home. God will stay so long as our heart beats in unison with His, but, when we grow aweary of Him and become enamored of sinful objects, He will depart, leaving us to entertain the foe and the stranger.

Like other householders, God stores His treasures and prized possessions in His home under bolt and

key. And what are these treasures He guards so jealously? They are grace and the habitual virtues that belong to it. All the day long God is busy in our soul, bringing in new ornaments of affection, beautifying, decorating His habitation to make it alike worthy of Him and us. This is His constant occupation and toil, which never weary or fatigue Him. We sleep, but He ever watches, lest while He slept the marauder might come and despoil His abode. He would allow no unbidden guest to cross the threshold where He is sovereign keeper and warden.

In his home the man of affairs throws off the solicitude and restraint of business cares. He draws the curtains on the outside world and forgets its existence, abandoning himself to the delights of the family circle. They become for the moment more important to him than the welfare of a nation. Home is all to him, the real occupation of life, and other things are but seeming. And to God the interests of His home are all in all—of vastly more moment than the rise and fall of nations, the collision of planets, the death of old suns and the birth of new ones. No concern of ours is beneath Him. We need not fear to annoy or worry Him by our importunities, for whatever pertains to us and our welfare is worthy of His notice and sympathy, simply because it relates to us. His

sole desire and employment, so to speak, are to think out new ways of making us happy and adding to the joys of our existence.

But an earthly habitation has many enemies—amongst them poverty, sickness and death. No matter how ideal its conditions, how virtuous its occupants and devoted to one another or refined in their intercourse, a shadow is always impending over it. The most perfect of homes cannot endure. It is but temporal, and so meant to be. At times want and distress descend upon it. When the father sees the roof-tree decaying overhead, the rains eating at the foundations, and his loved ones shivering with the cold and wasting away from insufficient nourishment, and all for lack of means, his lot becomes truly embittered. Love may still remain, but it becomes only a new source of sorrow when it cannot bring relief to the suffering.

And what home escapes sickness? It is a legacy of original sin and is always seeking to enter through the chinks of doorway or casement, and, in the event, it always succeeds in ensconcing itself by bedside or hearth. Yet, evil as it is, it serves to draw closer the heartstrings of the family. The memory of past tribulation is often a sweeter possession than that of a placid and even prosperity. The helplessness of the

sufferer not only wins the compassion and sympathy of the strong, but it draws forth the spirit of self-sacrifice. When the invalid sees with the eyes of others, is served by their hands and nursed by their affection, the bonds of family intercourse become riveted as by steel; and thus one great purpose intended by the Creator in the institution of the family is attained, forgetfulness of self. And finally death, the enemy of mankind, ruthlessly enters the happiest of homes and carries away its victims one by one; the sound of cheerful voices is succeeded by silence or the mocking echoes of noises from without, and nothing remains to tell of once happy lives save desolate rooms, and blackened embers on the hearth.

But in the human habitation chosen by God, there need be no fear of these enemies of domestic felicity. Neither poverty, illness nor death can approach the soul as long as God dwells within. While He is master, the soul will be rich with His treasures, hale and vigorous with His boundless life. Though, sooth to tell, the soul, even when encircled by God's arms, has enemies of its own similar to those of the body. It is never entirely secure from temptation nor free from the gnawing tooth of sorrow and trial. Our threefold enemy is ever watching to assault us with the death-dealing arrows of temptation, but these cannot reach

us so long as we nestle in the arms of God. Sorrow, though, and crosses, tribulations and afflictions will ever be with us; but, if we welcome them with outstretched hands as friends of ours and God's, they will not harm but only purify and strengthen us.

God, then, has made choice of our soul for His home, there to stay, if we but permit Him, in calm and storm amidst all the vicissitudes of our mundane existence until our tenement of clay falls apart, when, clinging all the closer to our emancipated spirit, He will enlarge it with the fulness of His Being forever.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOD'S LIVING TEMPLE.

AS A king's home is called a palace, so God's dwelling place is called a temple. And since the just soul, as we have seen, is God's abode, it can very properly be styled His temple. And this is the very appellation given it by St. Paul, who tells the Corinthians: "You are the temple of the living God; as God saith: I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."[1] In another epistle he speaks thus: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[2]

In the days of good King David God complained to him that He had no permanent dwelling place, but that, from the day He brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, He had been forced to dwell in a tabernacle or a tent.[3] David then began to pre-

[1] 2 Cor. vi, 16.
[2] 1 Cor. iii, 16.
[3] 2 Kings vii, 6, 7.

pare for the building of the temple, which was undertaken and finished by King Solomon. Solomon built it on a most magnificent scale, as can be seen from the fact that he had seventy thousand men to carry burdens, eighty thousand to hew stones in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. And he gathered workers in gold and silver, in brass and iron, marble and wood, and in purple and scarlet and blue. And in that time silver and gold became as common as the stones of the street.

And after the destruction of the first temple the Lord complained by the mouth of the prophet, Aggeus, that the people dwelt in ceiled houses while His own house lay desolate. This reproach moved the chosen people to begin the construction of the second temple which, however, seemed so inferior in comparison with the grandeur of the first that old men, who had seen both, wept on beholding its foundations. To encourage the builders, the prophet foretold: "Great shall be the glory of this house more than of the first," for into it would come "the Desired of all nations," meaning by this Jesus Christ.[4]

[4] Some say that there were three temples, the third being erected by Herod shortly before the birth of Christ, so that Christ never entered into the second temple. To this objection two answers are given: the first that Herod's temple was in the nature of a restoration and not an

The temple was a holy place, for it was dedicated to the service of God. It belonged to Him, and was sanctified by His presence. On the dedication day of Solomon's temple the priests could not enter it, "because the majesty of the Lord had filled it." "I have sanctified this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there forever, and My eyes and heart shall be there always,"[5] was God's own promise to Solomon.

And Solomon made bold to ask that all prayers might be heard in God's house, the petition for rain when the heavens were shut up, or against the pestilence, mildew, locusts, caterpillars, and when the enemy wasted the country or besieged the cities, and the prayer of the penitent sinner who begged for pardon.[6] And God was pleased to grant the request of Solomon, promising that, when His people made supplication to Him and did penance, He would forgive their sins and heal their soul and restrain the rav-

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entirely new building. The second urges a preference for the Septuagint over the Vulgate version of the prophet's words, viz.: "The last glory of this house shall be greater than the first," according to which the three temples, being constructed on the same site and for the same purpose, would be regarded as only one structure.

[5] 3 Kings ix, 3.

[6] 2 Par. vi.

ages of the foe. We recall how Christ, indignant with the money-changers and traffickers in the temple, drove them out with knotted cords, and upset their tables, because they had changed the temple from a house of prayer to a den of thieves.

The Jewish people, favored as they were by God, had only the one temple, while there are millions of Christian temples clustered in cities and scattered over the countryside throughout the world. We call these Christian temples churches, and, though some of them are splendid cathedrals or basilicas, triumphs of art and poems in stone, many are but little better than wayside barns or hovels. But, one and all, they are grander and more majestic than Solomon's temple. For, if the second temple was greater than the first, because it was to be graced with Christ's transient presence, what shall we say of Christian churches, which derive their dignity and honor not from being the storehouse of the ark or the tables of the law or the showbread, but because of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the abiding presence of Christ, body and blood, soul and Divinity?

Hallowed, then, are the temples of the Old and the New Law to God and His service, to prayer and sacrifice; and not less holy is the Christian soul in which God dwells, or rather more sacred is the soul, for,

while temples have only extrinsic holiness in so far as they are reserved for the service of God, the soul is intrinsically, formally holy, possessing moral goodness, participating in the Divine nature, beautified and sanctified by living grace of which no material building is capable.

St. Paul argues that as our members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, it must follow that we belong no longer to ourselves but to Him. He who buys anything becomes its owner. Now we have been bought, purchased at a great price, the blood of Christ, and so we are His property. God has sanctified us and made us his dwelling, and woe to him who violates this sanctuary and retreat, who desecrates his own soul, for such a one is guilty of rapine, he robs the Deity of His home, and him "shall God destroy."

A temple is essentially but an enclosed altar, whether the enclosure be a throng of adorers, a grove of trees on "a high place," or walls of stone. And an altar is a stone of sacrifice. The true religion and most of its spurious imitations have ever embodied sacrifice in their worship. In the Old Law sacrifice embraced a wide range of victims, from the first fruits of field and flock to libations of wine and the burning of incense. At the dedication of Solomon's temple there were offered twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand rams.

The Christian religion, too, has its great sacrifice of which all others were but types and figures, the clean oblation that is offered from the rising of the sun to its setting. And the practical idea of a Christian church is a structure conveniently arranged for the assistance of the faithful at the Holy Sacrifice. On entering the portals of the church the eye is at once seized and led by line and pillar, aisle and nave, to the high altar on which rests the sacrificial stone. Arch and wall, sculpture, fresco, cornice and frieze, are all subordinated to the absorbing spot, guarded by chancel rail, where the interest centers. So that the imagination almost hesitates whether chancel and transept, wall and roof were built round the tabernacle, or grew out of it by a living growth of stone and marble and tile, as corolla, petal and stamen unfold from the bud.

The living temple of God in the soul also has its altar of sacrifice. The sacrificial knife must be ever ready to slay upon it whatever we most prize and cherish. Our own will must be offered as a sweet-smelling holocaust. How dear to the natural man it is to follow his own vagaries, to idle or labor, do or undo, choose or leave, as whim or fancy moves, without sense of responsibility or care. But the supernatural man must restrain will and fancy, make them

an oblation upon the altar of self-conquest. To subdue, regulate and conquer natural inclination, and make our own will entirely subservient to God's, is pretty much the whole of the spiritual life.

Affection to creatures, those mobile, ever-changing objects outside of us, that are constantly assuming new forms and shapes of loveliness as the fabled Lorelei, is another appropriate victim of sacrifice. We must learn to regard creatures only as passing manifestations of creative power, to look through and behind them to the Creator Himself. Beautiful indeed and ravishing of spirit are created things, when regarded with a pure and simple eye as reflections of their Maker and messengers of His eternal love, but death-provoking and sinful when they wean us from God to the worship of themselves. Then they become but false gods; and we, their idolatrous worshippers.

Creature love is thus to be sacrificed upon the altar of the heart. Not that we are called on to eradicate or destroy our natural affections, but rather to elevate and supernaturalize them by the principles of faith and charity. Natural love which leads us away from God to rest in creatures for their own sake, is an enemy to the soul. We must learn so to love our neighbor and the good things of life that in and through them we love their Creator and use or cherish them

but for Him. And so it will come to pass that the more we love God, the more tender, intense and absorbing will be our affection for all His creatures. Thus Moses loved the chosen people, when he asked to be blotted out of the Book of Life if God would not pardon them; so St. Paul loved the Christians, when for their sake he wished to be an anathema from Christ. This was the spirit of the great Christian saints, of the gentle Franciscan founder, who spoke of brother Sun and sister Death, and of the innumerable hosts who doomed themselves to lifelong toil and labor and even to chains and death for the welfare of their neighbor.

A temple is a place of silence and prayer. We escape from the turbulent tide, that ebbs and flows in the crowded city streets, into the quiet recesses of the Christian church, where the noises of life are hushed or subdued into a distant murmur. There the glow of the sanctuary lamp speaks to us of the Unseen Presence, and we whisper our sentiments of love and devotion. The temple of our soul, too, must be barred to the profane, unholy things without, it must ever be redolent of the lingering incense of prayer, and its aisles must echo only to the voice of praise and adoration. Its silence must not be disturbed by the jangling noises and discord of daily life. Con-

verse with the Deity by ejaculatory prayer, fervent acts of the will by union of affection and desire, must be its normal state.

What consolation, when harassed by the worries and trials of life, to know that we are not forced to seek rest and refreshment of spirit in a temple made with hands; that we can instantly have recourse to the hallowed sanctuary of our own soul where dwells the ineffable presence of the Triune God, to Whom we can speak in all the fulness of love, and from Whom will come an answer, soft, melodious and clear as the distant peal of an angelus bell on a still and tranquil evening!

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRIST'S BODY TO ME.

HE manifestations of God's love to man, which we have thus far considered, belong in general to the saints of the Old and the New Law. The gifts of nature, which are so touchingly referred to in the psalms, are the property of all mankind; and the grace of Christ has sanctified the souls of all just men who ever lived. Every descendant of Adam, who loved and served God, was endowed with grace and shared in its privileges. Hence in the Old Law the just were friends and children of God, sharers in the Divine nature, and temples of the Holy Ghost.

But, we of the New Law have many privileges and testimonials of love, which were denied the saints of the older dispensation. We have the Incarnate God dwelling with us on earth, the Church He established, and the sacraments, those brimming channels of grace, besides a multiplicity of other gifts such as the Scriptural writings of the New Testament, the dogmatic

and affective writings of the Fathers and an army of other spiritual writers, the inspiriting lives of the saints, miracles, shrines, pilgrimages and devotions, and a wonderful number and variety of religious orders and congregations.

All these evidences of God's predilection take their rise from the manifestation of the Godhead in the flesh. To speak in a human way, Infinite Love wrestled for many a dark and drearisome century with the other Divine attributes, until it finally conquered, and God determined to descend to earth. Hitherto, Love had been satisfied with lifting men to the Divine sphere by grace; now it would descend to man's level by becoming like him in all things save sin. God would empty and abase Himself, taking the form of a slave. He came upon this tiny, insignificant planet and hid himself in the womb of a Virgin Mother. The disclosure to mortals came on Christmas night in a vile stable in a retired hamlet of an obscure and enslaved nation. The petty great and powerful of earth were not there to do Him homage, but lowly shepherds adored while angel choirs filled the midnight sky with heavenly radiance and joyful psalmody.

And God was made man. He had become a helpless babe. His infatuation for us was at last satisfied. Man had previously been raised to participation in

the Divine nature, now God was in the likeness of man. Could Love go further? God had espoused human nature, uniting the human and divine in the Person of Christ, and, by descent from Adam through Mary, He had become Brother to each and every human being. Some two thousand years ago did this Incarnation of the Godhead take place, but it has never ceased, it never will cease throughout the ages of eternity. Men repudiated Christ, slew Him, fastened Him to the gibbet in obloquy and disdain, but withal they could not kill His love for them.

Though forced to ascend to His Father in heaven, the God-man found a way of still remaining amongst men, of perpetuating His Incarnation on earth as well as in the realms of bliss. He instituted the Eucharist, a sacrament in which veils are drawn about His humanity, as in the Incarnation the veils of flesh and blood were wrapped round the Divinity. In this sacrament of love Christians are favored above the greatest saints of the Old Law. Never was it given to them to know the Christ as we know Him, to eat His flesh and drink His blood under the appearances of bread and wine. Herein arises a new union of love between God and the Christian. Christ after His resurrection dies no more. He lives in the bosom of His Father, and daily communicates Himself, body

and soul, Divinity and humanity, to the faithful. Thus are heaven and earth commingled, God daily descending to earth and men rising to celestial communion with Him.

The Body that was fashioned for God the Son in Mary's womb, enters the body of each Christian and there abideth, bringing in its train a host of ministering spirits, and giving forth the same current of graces that flowed from it in Christ's ministrations when He trod the hills and vales of Palestine. And why does He come, body and soul, into the bosom of us Christians? That He may abide in us and we in Him, that so we may have life everlasting.[1] And this mutual indwelling of Christ and us is to be understood not only of His substantial presence within us, but also of the union of charity between Him and us.

As material food and drink nourish the body, Christ's Body and Blood feed and strengthen the soul. Natural food enters into our arteries and veins, and is transmuted from dead elements into living tissue and substance. It is changed into us. Not so with this spiritual food of our soul. Christ's Body is not changed into ours, but we, in a manner, are changed into Him. For, His Body is not dead, but living, and in a union of living things the higher life prevails,

[1] John vi.

the inferior is absorbed into the superior. The components of earth and air are changed into living grass, this in turn becomes the flesh of grazing herds and flocks, and these animals become man's food and are changed into human substance. Thus by nature's law, the elements and lower organisms minister to the higher, the inferior life is elevated to the superior. But the Divine life is higher than the human and so Christ's life cannot be changed into ours, but ours is elevated to become His. Thus is verified the expression of Christ Himself that He lives in us and we in Him.

This is the doctrine taught by the Roman Catechism, which says that the Eucharist "is not, like bread and wine, changed into our substance, but, in some measure, changes us into its own nature." And this teaching it derives from the Fathers.

The primary effect of this Sacrament is union with Christ in charity, and this is produced by an increase of sanctifying grace, which is conferred after the manner of spiritual food. This heavenly nourishment makes the recipient live, as it were, with Christ's life, love with His charity, and under the influence of this charity grow in all other virtues. By this increase of sanctifying grace the soul is made to tingle with intensest spiritual life, whereby decay is pre-

vented, the number of venial sins is diminished, and the death of grievous sin averted. As the body that is weak and anaemic easily falls a prey to the countless germs and bacilli, which ever lie in wait for it in air and water and food, seeking entrance into the circulatory system; whereas the strong and vigorous constitution easily repels these invading hordes: so, too, the soul that is frequently nourished with the Body of Christ has strength to ward off the temptations and sins that ever strive to find lodgement in it.

With the wealth of sanctifying grace received in Communion come a host of actual graces, that urge, impel the soul to numerous acts of the theological and moral virtues, and blow the fire of charity to a white heat, consuming in its flames venial faults and the remnants of past sins.

The normal effect of material food is to please and satisfy the taste as well as to nourish the body, and the Eucharistic food, likewise, brings with it every spiritual savor and sweetness. To it spiritual writers apply the words of the Canticle:[2] "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." The pleasures of the table are proverbial, and to them the carnal and earthly-minded devoted a great portion of their existence. Instead of taking sustenance

[2] v, 1.

to prepare them for work, they rather take exercise in order to have a relish for more meat and drink. But, all the pleasures and delights of the table cannot be compared with the sweetness and joy hidden away in this spiritual banquet of the soul. The moments of transport when the consecrated Host passes the lips of the recipient, cannot be realized or appreciated save by one who has experienced them. The saints were often ravished out of themselves in the reception of the Eucharist, they were lifted from the earth, their countenance shone with the overflow of the radiance from within, and they became insensible to their surroundings.

Some noted ecstatics, such as St. Lydwine of Schiedam, Louis Lateau, and Gemma Galgani lost the desire of earthly food, and subsisted for months on the Eucharist alone. It was to them not only spiritual substance, but bodily as well. As the taste of persons who are accustomed to delicate viands cannot brook a coarse, common diet, so these chosen souls, after being habituated to the Bread of Angels, could not endure the rarest and most exquisite material dishes.

Here, however, we may note the remark of St. Thomas, that this spiritual refreshment, which all who devoutly approach the Holy Table perceive, is of two kinds. The first gives us an increase of devotion and

sensible consolation. But at times God may withhold this sweetness, to give us instead a spiritual taste better suited or more necessary to our condition, namely, an understanding or appreciation of its exceeding usefulness for our soul.[3]

The Eucharist, then, is a hallowing of spirit by Spirit, the sanctification of our soul by God; but it is more than this, it is the touch, as it were, of body to Body through the sacramental species. When Christ walked the earth the touch of His hand, yea, of his garment, wrought wonders, restoring health and vigor to withered limb and atrophied organ. Nor has His glorified Body today lost its health-giving power. Christ's Body and ours, when united in the Sacrament, do not form one substance, for each retains its manner of existence. But, as the theologian Vasquez teaches, since love tends to the closest possible union between lover and beloved, Christ, in the vehemence of His affection, is driven to satisfy it by joining His Body to ours. Entering within us, He takes possession, considering our body as His and treating its members as members of His flesh and of His bones.[4]

Through the primal sin came the inherited rebellion of the flesh against the spirit. If man's will re-

[3] opusc. 58 cap. 22.
[4] Vasquez, disp. 204.

fused to obey its Creator, neither would man's body be subject to his mind. The body became a wild, independent agent, seeking emancipation from the control of reason and disregarding the command of its master. It would not brook control, so that even the Apostle of the Gentiles cried out in anguish against its tyrannous sway and capricious moods. But, at the sacramental touch of Christ's Body it loses to an extent its self-will and ferocity, and returns in some degree to the tamed, serviceable condition in which it was created. Original justice has fled from this sin-accursed planet never to return; but in the bodies of the saints who frequently eat Christ's flesh there is at least some approach to the state of primitive innocence, and for what is wanting Christ's grace is sufficient. Whether this gradual subjection of the law of our members to the law of the spirit be produced indirectly by an augmentation of charity, or by a direct moderating action of the Sacrament on the bodily humors and temperament, we shall leave it to theologians to discuss. Suffice it for us that the effect is there, and that thus some remedy is given to man against the cruel tyranny of passion.

What gratitude we owe to God for the chaste generation produced by the "wine that springeth forth virgins"! Because of the purifying effect of the

Eucharist, countless virgins, men and women, throughout the centuries have been enabled to sing in heaven the canticle that only they can sing. Virginal chastity is a rare exotic, which the weed-choked gardens of earth can never of themselves bring forth. Its roots cannot flourish in sin-laden soil, nor can it be propagated by seed or cutting or bud. It must be transplanted from heaven by grace, and it is most often found in those whose bodies are sanctified by the frequent touch of Christ's Body through the sacred species.

And Christ, dwelling within us, gives our body a title to a glorious resurrection and immortality. Every earthly organism is prone to decay. Birth, growth, decay and death form the never-ending cycle of every living thing we see about us. Nor is man's body an exception to the general law. It tends to be resolved into its constituent elements. But grace has a saving, revivifying power by which the severed members of the dead body, its scattered ashes and atoms may be regathered and reconstructed into a living frame. The Eucharist is a living fount of grace, and to it in a peculiar sense is attributed our incorporation into Christ's mystic body, which can never die. And when the Fathers attribute the glorious resurrection of the body to the Eucharist, they mean that the intimate

sacramental union of Christ's Body with ours is a further congruous title for its resurrection, since it were not meet that a body sanctified in Communion by Christ's risen body should not itself rise again. And so the theologians tell us that he who receives the Eucharist has two titles to rise again in glory, the first from grace, and the second from the hallowing of his body by Christ's.

Thrice happy, then, the Christian, who so realizes and appreciates the commingling of Christ's Body with his, as the Fathers express it, that he is compelled by love to a daily or frequent reception of the Eucharist. The Divine life grafted on his soul will change his nature and make him a Godlike being. Or rather, since Christ, as He Himself tells us, is the vine and we the branches, we shall be grafted on Him, and the fruit we produce shall spring from and be nurtured by the sap of the Divine life by which we shall live.

CHAPTER XV.

FACE TO FACE.

HIS life is an exile from home, prolonged through the dragging years, and the imprisoned soul sighs for release from bondage, yearns for the free, boundless life of the heavenly courts. And yet, tedious as is our wayfaring here below it is not wholly wretched. How could it be, when we swim in an ocean of love as the fish in the sea, when God is our Friend and Lover, Father and Mother, when He inhabits us, and Christ is ready to enter our tabernacle of clay each morning to nourish us with His own flesh and blood?

But from this very fact arises a new source of heart-weariness, to know that we are so near to God and yet so far away, that He is in and all about us, and yet, for our veils of flesh, we cannot see and possess Him. The more ardent our love, the more poignant the anguish of our separation from its object. To become one with our beloved or to die, is the cry of the heart. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my

beloved, that you tell him I languish with love."[1] Never to have known our beloved were indeed a misfortune, but to know Him and be separated from Him is a rending of the heart.

Could any fate be more dolorous than to live forever in this world? Would not the thought of going on in the same round of duties, of rising, working, eating and sleeping, in an unending cycle, become a hideous nightmare? We dread to die, but to lead without end this present dying life of ours, would be a prospect calculated to drive us to distraction. St. John of the Cross, mystic and poet, thus laments:

"This life that I am living
Is a lifeless life,
And so, a death continuing
Until I come to live with Thee.
O God, hear Thou my cry!
This life of mine I will it not;
I am dying because I am not dead."

But, one cheering thought sustains us, that the hour of freedom will strike for us at last, that no matter how dismal and soul-trying our tasks and labor the Master Workman will one day give the signal for quitting work and going home to rest.

[1] Cant. vi, 8.

And what kind of existence has our Friend, Father and Lover reserved for us beyond the pearly gates in the city whose streets are of transparent gold, where there shall be no night nor darkness, nor weeping nor mourning, but joy and happiness forevermore? What kind of a mansion is Christ preparing for us in the home of His Father?

When we come to consider the magnificent reward that God has prepared for those who love Him, imagination fails, for no matter how great our anticipations may be they will always fall short of the reality. In our present life seldom do anticipated joys respond fully to expectation. Some unforeseen obstacle prevents our full enjoyment; and even should we attain the object of our heart's desire we soon tire of it, so that what beforehand we deemed worthy of attainment, seems in the event hardly worth the effort it cost. The opposite, however, is true in regard to the joys of the after life. Paint we them in colors never so glorious, the pictured prospect will be more than realized, since eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those who love him.

One of the Divine attributes displayed in creation is munificence or liberality. God is prodigal of His gifts. Economy in man is a virtue, but God knows it

not. He is a spendthrift in generosity, for His treasures never diminish. He lavishes them on us beyond all our needs. We require a little air to breathe, and God has made an ocean of it sixty or more miles in height, a huge reservoir we can never exhaust. We require perhaps a dozen articles of diet, and the Creator serves us with thousands and thousands of dishes, varying with soil and climate and season. Our table supplies come from the depth of ocean, from the realm of air, they grow in field and forest, they hang from trees and multiply underground. St. Ignatius had so lively an appreciation of the Divine bounty in this respect that, in returning thanks after meals, his face at times glowed with feelings of gratitude.

How many colors are needed to dye the objects about us? Surely not more than the seven seen in the rainbow or produced by the prism; and yet these are shaded into an innumerable variety of hues and tints, which in turn are arranged in a multitude of brilliant or sober combinations, each differing from the other, and all harmonious and pleasing to the eye. Look this rich summer morning at yonder prospect of hill and dale, orchard, field and meadow, and count if you can the varied tints of green from light yellowish to deep blue or blackish. You will easily number a hundred shades, each herb and plant and tree, singly and

in mass, having its own peculiar tint, which, too, constantly changes at each hour of the day, according to the intensity of the light, the position of the clouds and the angle of view.

This thought we could pursue into never-ending applications. Witness the illimitable expanse of ocean and its unfathomable depths, the unexplored reach of space, sown with suns unnumbered, the almost infinite variety and fecundity of plant and animal life. Who will count the light vibrations of a single candle, or the avalanche of seeds that fall from a maple tree, not one of which perhaps is destined to germinate? And if the hand of Providence is so profuse, almost wasteful, in its gifts to us in exile, what will be its munificence in the place of reward? If the seed-time be so abounding, what will the harvest be? In this life God must put a constant check and restraint on His liberality, lest He overwhelm us with His beneficence, and make this orb so entrancing that we may forget the Giver in the splendor of His gifts. This world, all in all, is but a presage of the next, and so the Divine munificence displayed in it is at most but an earnest of what we may expect. The untold riches and delights that He has packed away for us into every moment of the endless age to come, are far and away beyond all we can surmise or anticipate. If

the antechamber in which we are, says one of the Fathers, is so magnificent, what will the royal throne room be; if the floor of heaven so glistens with its patens of light, what must the superstructure be?

The great, essential joy of heaven will be the Vision wherein we shall see God face to face, shall know even as we are known, and love as we are loved. Even in this world the greatest pleasure comes from the exercise of our faculties of knowing and loving. To know and understand, this has been the pursuit of sage and philosopher from the dawn of history, and in it they have forgotten all other sublunary things, they have neglected food and sleep and health. They have sacrificed all on the altar of knowledge. To love and strive for the object of desire is a natural beatitude. But God is infinite perfection, and the knowledge we shall have of Him is direct, face to face, the most intimate possible to creature; and love in heaven is not merely that of desire, but of fruition, derived from the possession of Him. We love and are loved, we possess and are possessed, we enjoy and are enjoyed, we are united to God, according to the expression of some of the Fathers, as heat to the molten iron, we are lost, dissolved in Him as two pieces of wax fused together. Our faculties, after the trying vicissitudes of life are now at rest. The rest, however, is not of

inaction, but of perfectly poised and balanced activity, it is the slumber of the revolving flywheel not of the discarded and rusting tool, it is a repose from labor not from action.

The joy and happiness of the soul in heaven will be increased by reunion with the glorified body of whose nature and characteristics St. Paul[2] gives us some idea. He compares it to the plant that springs from the seed. And, as the plant is but a germination and development of the seed, so the risen body is not a different body from the one we have on earth, but the same, glorified and spiritualized. The qualities of the plant depend on the nature of the seed that is sown, so, too, will the new qualities of the body in heaven depend on the good works done in the flesh.

We shall arise, then, in the same bodies we possess on earth, but they will be so changed and transfigured as to be unrecognizable. Who could recognize the acorn in the oak, the grub in the butterfly? And yet the one is but the development of the other. The Apostle tells us the body "is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption." It is sown or planted in the grave when corrupted in death; and all through life the body tends in a way toward corruption. There is a constant disintegration going on in it, a steady

[2] 1 Cor. xv, 35 flg.

sapping of its vitality, which require a perennial renewal of strength and force. It is ever subject to hunger and thirst and sickness. But in heaven it will have the gifts of impassibility and immortality. No more will death like a gaunt spectre threaten it with extinction; no more shall there be hunger, thirst, or suffering from heat and cold. The exhausting struggle of life will be done, the conflict with penury and want, with sickness and labor will be over, as well as the tense watch and guard against our enemies. They will have disappeared and with them fear and the sound of alarums. Peace and tranquillity will be our portion, and existence will be one long holiday without care or anxiety. We shall be forever happy children of a loving and all-powerful Father.

And, as Christ's body shone in the resurrection so will ours, for His rising is a type of ours. In heaven there will be no need of sun or moon, for the Lamb shall be the light thereof, and each glorified body will be a light to itself. At set of sun the windows in the east reflect back its glory until countless suns are beaming with borrowed light. And the bodies of the just in heaven will be refulgent with the reflected glory of God and the overflow of splendor and beauty from the soul. We have Christ's own word for it that "the just shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom

of their Father."[3] Night and darkness then will be things of the past, to be remembered but as the shadows of an earthly existence. Here we possess ideals of human beauty, of its varying types, suitable to youth and manhood and age, but seldom do we meet one who is perfect in form, in vigor, grace and complexion. And the most perfect of human bodies is so defiled with natural defects, with the exudations, secretions and effluvia of its animal nature, that it cannot but be repulsive to a fastidious taste. But all this will be changed in heaven.

Whatever is repellent, disgusting in the body will disappear, for, according to St. Paul, it will no longer be an animal body but a spiritual body. Not that our body will cease to be material and become entirely spiritual, for man, being essentially a compound of matter and spirit, can never cease to have a bodily nature, can never become a pure spirit as the angels are. But the animal body we now possess shall be so purified and sublimated, so purged and refined of what is gross and vile and offensive as to resemble a spiritual nature. The mere animal operations of eating, drinking and sleeping, of growth and decay, of generation shall disappear. Jesus rebuked the Sadducees who denied the resurrection, chiding them for

[3] Matt. xiii, 43.

not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God, since in heaven there shall be no marrying nor giving in marriage, but men shall be like the angels of God.[4]

One of the arguments used by the Fathers for the fittingness of the resurrection is, that as the body of man shared in the conflicts and victories of his earthly probation, so also it should participate in the reward. But how is the body to be rewarded? On earth the pleasure of the body comes directly through the senses, nor is it all of a crass nature. Consider the delight of the eye in beholding light, motion and color, the wide-extending plain and ocean, greening hills and silver streams, the star-studded canopy above, the human countenance and "form divine." And all this is but an excess and redundance of the pleasure of sight, not necessary or needful for the ordinary purposes of life. And how the ear is charmed by the harmony of the winds, the dulcet tones and inflections of the human voice, by song and canticle and chorus! Nor are these musical qualities of sound vibration required to convey thought by words, for which a monotonous succession of vowel and consonant sounds would have been sufficient, like the uniform, marshalled lines on a page of print. Now, since eye and ear are susceptible of such elevating pleasure on earth

[4] Mark xii, 24, 25.

will they have less in Heaven? Coarse pleasure, arising from the gross material needs of our animal nature, will be replaced by that which is suitable to the spiritualized condition of the glorified body. St. John, rapt in vision, saw wondrous sights of beauty in Heaven, and he heard canticles sung by the saints and angels, of which he preserved for us some of the words and refrains. And we know that even the angels themselves can descend to earthly melody, as was shown in the hymn they sang on the first Christmas night.

Power and strength will be characteristics of the risen body. Its senses and members will be quick and vigorous, ready to respond to the impulse and behest of the soul. It will be endowed with celerity of motion, enabling it to transport itself with the speed of thought from place to place and to penetrate solid objects at will. Christ "will reform the body of our lowness"[5] and make it like to His glorified body.

There will be a new heaven and a new earth, according to St. John and St. Peter, and so our bodies will be remade, reformed, to suit the new manner of existence. We shall not be bound to the laws of space and gravity, since St. Thomas tells us that a corporeal place or habitation will not be necessary for our hap-

[5] Phil. iii, 21.

piness, though we shall have it as an accidental adjunct and an additional pleasure of glory.[6]

Even the friendship of others, which is so needful to us on earth, will be but an accidental joy in heaven. The vision of God will so entirely satisfy us and fill all our faculties to repletion, that we shall feel no need of solace, or refreshment from the companionship of angels and saints. At the same time, while we shall be dependent upon no creature for our essential beatitude, there can be no doubt that close intercourse with the blessed will give us greater added enjoyment than any earthly friendship can bestow. Friends, who loved each other in charity so intense that their existences were bound up one in the other, will not be severed, but will rejoice a hundredfold in each other's beatitude and gifts. And we shall have not two or three friends, but each one of all the hosts of the blessed will be to us a brother or sister in whose beauty and perfection we shall rejoice as though they were our own.

These are some of the ineffable delights that God has prepared for those who love and serve him. Every morning on earth is, as it were, a new creation of loveliness, a call to new life, energy and activity; and heaven will be but one long day of happiness with a

[6] Summa. 1a 2ae, Q. 7 ad 3um.

dawn but no setting; each moment of it bringing new pleasures, a renewal of intensest action, a further plunging and immersing into the infinite perfections of God, a deeper and more perfect appropriation and appreciation of Him and the wondrous works of His hands.

The angel in the Apocalypse swore by Him Who created heaven and earth "That time shall be no more." And to the angels and saints of heaven, who live in closest brotherhood with one another and with Christ, their elder Brother, one day shall appear as thousands and thousands as but one, for all shall be rapt in ecstacy and love, beholding God as He is, world without end, Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

WAITING.

UR story of love is ended, sadly unequal as it is to the inspiration of the theme and marred in its telling by halting utterance. To weave the tale aright would have required a defter hand and more skillful artificer in speech; if indeed it be possible for earthly skill to do justice to an idyl which the choirs of the blessed will take an eternity to hymn.

We realize in a groping fashion that each individual person is a special creation, in whose behalf God seems to tax His infinite resources of love and power, and with whom he wishes to enter into a compact of eternal friendship. But friendship is not one-sided, it is a mutual donation and has reciprocal obligations and duties. Nor is love all words or honeyed sweetness. Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord," can enter into the heavenly kingdom. Deeds are the true test of friendship.

Supernatural love is not something emotional; in fact, it is not in the feelings at all. It is an act of the

will, seeking God for Himself, for His own sake, and not for any personal emolument of one's own, not for spiritual sweetness, joy, nor consolation. Desire accompanies love necessarily, and pleasure and delight follow possession. So the soul which loves God must desire Him, and once it possesses Him it will rest in Him as its final felicity and beatitude. The possession we have in this life is by grace, and hence is not complete, and our enjoyment of Him here is in keeping with our possession, being only in part and inchoative compared with what it will be in heavenly bliss. But the spiritual delights sometimes given to Christians even on earth, are so sweet and alluring that spiritual writers are forced to put us on our guard against them.

They warn us that neither consolation nor spiritual sweetness is love, but only its effect; and that he who strives after them for their own sake, is but seeking self, is indulging in sentimentality, and sentimentality is not charity, it is not even a good counterfeit of it. Many servants of God persevered long years in aridity of soul, deprived of sensible consolation. Prayer was distasteful to them, the fountain of devotion within them was sealed. But what these holy persons lacked in sensible devotion was made up to them in purely spiritual favors; and within the depths of their

being they possessed a calm, unalterable peace, that enabled them to rise superior to the fluctuations of sense.

If we wish to know the true test of love on earth, it is easy to find it. We need not be distressed by uncertainty whether we love God, for Christ Himself has given us the criterion. At the Last Supper He said to His Apostles: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me."[1] The beloved disciple also tells us that whoever keepeth Christ's word, "in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected; and by this we know that we are in Him."[2] If we keep God's law we love Him, and His commandments are not heavy. They who imagine that charity consists in performing great and marvellous deeds, in long prayers, in constant fasting and penance, in working miracles, in eloquent preaching or lonely vigils, may possibly find themselves mistaken. Without the observance of the commandments these will amount to nothing.

Plodding along faithfully day after day at our appointed tasks, howsoever humble they may be, unseen and unnoticed of men, we may attain to a high degree of sanctity. St. Joseph spent his life at the carpen-

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[1] John xiv, 21.
[2] 1 John ii, 5.

ter's bench, chiseling and planing and sawing; not one spoken word of his has been deemed worthy of record in the Scriptures, and yet which of the saints equals him in glory? St. Rita was but a servant maid. Bernadette Soubiroux, a little peasant girl, was gathering sticks for firewood when Our Lady appeared to her in the grotto at Lourdes and spoke the memorable words, "I am the Immaculate Conception." St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, the Jesuit lay-brother, worked out his sanctification mainly by saying his beads and answering the college door bell. It is not the work we do or position we hold, that makes us acceptable to God, but the spirit of fidelity we put into it. Men label occupations great or lowly, rating them by their scale of dignity; God has no such standard. He passes by the exterior nature of the work done, and views the interior disposition with which it is performed. Men are often not responsible for what tasks they are set to do. Some are placed as electric lights upon the mountains, others are but rush lights in the valley; some are in command of armies, and others must serve in the trenches or take charge of the accoutrements. But one and all will be recompensed not for what they did, so much as for the spirit of fidelity and zeal with which they served.

The practice of charity in discharge of duty is the

whole law and the prophets. Charity is the informing principle of all other virtues; without it no other virtue is meritorious of eternal reward, and with it all our actions may be minted into the golden coin of heaven. Charity, as has been intimated in the preceding chapters, will beget in us a lively faith, and make us realize the constant presence of God, purify our intentions, lead us to work for Him with zeal, fidelity and industry, incite us to frequent and constant conversation with Him in prayer, and bring us to the altar in visits to the Blessed Sacrament and for its frequent reception.

But when it has done all this, charity will still urge us onward. One of the saints said that work done for God is good, prayer is better and suffering is best. And this brings us to the consideration of the mysterious property of charity, which prompts the Christian to desire to suffer for the beloved. No life is so unfortunate as to be without suffering of some kind, no day even is without some drops of this golden elixir. Christ Himself bade us take up our cross daily and follow Him; and thus sterling Christians, after the example of the Apostles who went forth from stripes and chains rejoicing, have always thought it gain to suffer for Christ. The heart-cry of St. Theresa was "to suffer or to die;" St. John of the Cross,

when asked by our Lord what reward he desired for his good deeds, replied, "to suffer and be held in contempt for Thy sake." St. Colette said the severest pain that could be sent her "would be to pass a day without anything to suffer for God." And St. Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises bids us pray for suffering.

But, whether we pray for it or not, suffering is bound to come in some shape or form. The saints particularly are destined to suffer. Misrepresentation, painful illness, and sometimes persecution unto death are their frequent lot. Their lives are not infrequently a long-drawn martyrdom.

A curious instance regarding St. Lydwine of Schiedam has been preserved for us in a document drawn up and signed in the year 1421 by the civic officials of that town. They certify that she had been lying abed for twenty-three years, and within the preceding seven had used no food or drink at all, and had slept all told scarcely the space of two nights. Her body could be moved only with the greatest care and by wrapping cloths about it, lest it fall in pieces. After the writing of this document, the sufferer lived twelve years more, practically in the same condition, and though putrefaction in a repulsive form had set in, a sweet fragrance from her body filled the room. Many fa-

miliar instances of chronic and excruciating suffering are related in the history of the Church, and they are not unknown in our own time.

Such pains, if endured patiently and cheerfully, will raise the sufferer to a high degree of sanctity. The desire of suffering has led some of the saints to torture their innocent bodies, to endure cruel fasts and keep lonely vigils; it led the anchorets to fill the deserts of old, it created the band of stylites who lived perpetually upon pillars, exposed without shelter to all the inclemency of the weather. It bred the race of recluses, men and women, who caused themselves to be perpetually immured in a solitary cell with only an opening for the admission of food.

These are the extreme examples of the saints, whom we are called to admire but probably not to imitate. Their spirit, however, we can imbibe, at least so far as to undergo with resignation and cheerfulness the trials sent us by God. For He will surely send them, and when they come we must remember they are gifts from His hand, gifts of mercy and love; they are meant for our purification and sanctification. And what is the ordinary man or woman called to suffer? Sprinkled freely through our days, will be rebuffs, humiliations, toil, unrewarded effort, unsuccessful labors, desires unfulfilled, and perhaps poverty and ill-

health. At one time the result of long, untiring labor will be swept away; at another, our aims and ambitions will fall lamentably short of realization. Our work perhaps is unappreciated, unnoticed and disregarded, while others are preferred before us. We lack talent that we desire or need for our work, or we have no proper field in which to use the abilities we possess; or, given talent and opportunity for its use, our efforts are thwarted by the ill-will or indifference of those we would benefit. And with the most favorable of opportunities how little can the ordinary man compass in a lifetime! Old age draws on apace and seizes us in its talons, before perhaps we have fairly shaped our ideals.

And death, the foe of all, is soon seen beckoning to us from over the river and, when it calls, its demands are peremptory; we cannot bribe or coax it to bide awhile, until we complete our unfinished tasks. Every Christian in imitation of Christ must mount to Calvary's height and lay down his life, the supreme act of each earthly existence. But love is strong as death, and it must endure to the end.

The fear of death will not daunt the Christian soul. His faith teaches him it is but the entrance into life, and hence St. Paul desired to be dissolved and be with Christ. The Christian who has led a mortified life,

who is crucified to the world, and to whom the world is crucified, will not regret to die, he will welcome death as a release from bondage, as a call from exile to his home in heaven. When he enters into the valley, and darkness begins to fall upon him, and the tawdry panorama of life is crumbling into pieces about him, he will hold fast by the hand faith and hope and charity, and sinking into a gentle sleep, with their arms about him, he will wake in the blessed land to find that faith has given place to vision, hope to fruition, while charity remains to bind him to God forever. And love, that was the beginning and the middle, is now become

THE END.

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